# EUROPEAN ADVENTURERS OF NORTHERN INDIA, 1785 to 1849



RANJIT SINGH IN DURBAR.
Facing Maharajah (standing): Court, Allard, Ventura, Avitable, Foulkes, Argond.
Hira Singh facing Maharajah.
On latter's right, the Dogra brothers, Sham Singh and Sheik Fakir Ud din.

# EUROPEAN ADVENTURERS OF NORTHERN INDIA,

## 1785 to 1849.

"Hands that the rod of Empire might have swayed."—THOMAS GRAY.

By

C. GREY.

Edited by

H. L. O. GARRETT, M.A.,

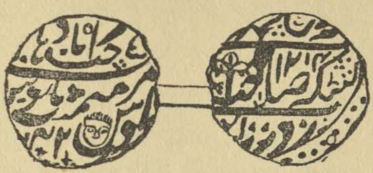
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## Corrigenda.

Page 31, line 31, *for* " of " *read* " for ".

Page 95, line 27, *for* " ordered " *read* " was very dis ".

Page 125, line 29, *for* " thense " *read* " thence ".

Page 171, line 32, *for* " slected " *read* " selected ".

Page 265, under, portrait of Col. Gardiner *read* " 69 " *for* " 79 ".

Page 277, *for* Major Pears' *read* Major Pearce's.

Note :—Certain articles embodied in the book have already appeared in a shorter form in the " Civil and Military Gazette " to whom we are indebted for permission to reproduce them.

# PREFACE.

It is now a good many years since Compton wrote his 'European Adventurers' and our excuse for producing a new book on the subject must be that his work is both out of date and incomplete. Out of date, because a number of new facts have come to light with regard to some of the better known men, and incomplete because he was ignorant of the existence of some of the others.

The present work represents some six years of labour in the archives of the Punjab Government, as well as the consultation of a very large number of contemporary memoirs and other works, a full bibliography of which will be found in the appendix.

Roughly speaking, the Adventurers fall into two groups. There are the well known men like George Thomas and Avitabile, of whom more or less exhaustive memoirs have appeared in the past. There are also the lesser known men of whom no account has hitherto appeared, and whose careers we have had to trace from many sources. Again the Adventurers may be classified into combatants and non-combatants. The former include Generals like Ventura and common deserters like Potter. In the latter class we find medical men like Honigberger and Harlan, the antiquarian Masson, and Bianchi, the engineer. There is hardly a nation that is not included in the list of names which runs to over seventy.

One name is deserving of special mention. It is that of Alexander Gardiner. Gardiner contributed his own reminiscences to the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1852 and in 1898 his life was written by Major Pearce. Both of these portray him as the hero of many wild adventures and as a very perfect gentle-

knight. An exhaustive study of the records has convinced us that both these views are entirely incorrect, that the man was a prize liar who passed off other men's adventures as his own, and who was capable of undertaking unsavoury duties with which other men entirely refused to have any thing to do.

The Journal of M. Court has not before been made public. It is a description of his travels in Central Asia and written by a trained and well educated soldier—for M. Court was by far the most refined of the Frenchmen who found their way into the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh—it was practically a route book and as such was treated as a confidential document. For many years it has lain in its original French in the archives of the Government of India. Through the courtesy of the latter we have been enabled to make a translation which will be found in the appendix.

It may be objected that we have included in this volume the details of a number of unimportant individuals. To this we would reply that our object has been to make the record as complete as possible by including all European adventurers of whatever class or station.

H. L. O. GARRETT.

*Lahore, January 1929.* C. GREY.

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*Note.*—The Punjab Government takes no responsibility for the correctness of any statement or expression of views made in this book.

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# CHAPTER I

## Introductory

### THE EUROPEAN MILITARY ADVENTURERS OF INDIA

To the average reader of Indian military history, few personalities are more interesting than those of the military adventurers, who, from time to time, flit across the pages of time-stained records, or the faded leaves of forgotten (or almost forgotten) books, or whose names are inscribed on almost obliterated tomb-stones in the grave-yards of long-deserted stations.

To quote Herbert Compton, the historian of a few :*

" Their names are but as indistinct items on a long forgotten scroll, almost obliterated by the dust of time, yet up to a comparatively late period some of these forgotten personalities created vast armies, conquered kingdoms, overturned princes, and ruled provinces, winning such power and distinction as is now and for ever impossible!"

Their day has passed. Those who attained fame and wealth the lesser soldiers of fortune who aided them so to do, and the multitude of European and Eurasian adventurers, who trained, led, and even fought, in the ranks of the mercenary armies of the Princes of India, sharing the varying fortunes of internecine strife, or against, or allied with the British, have, all but a few, been forgotten, and even those few owe their memory to fortuitous circumstances—

The knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust ;
His bones are with the saints,
We trust.

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* European Adventurers, page 7.

A pious hope! If an improbable contingency which would almost certainly have been unacceptable to the adventurers themselves, for, though their virtues may have been soldierly, they were usually anything but saintly! With such men, creeds or religious observances counted for nothing, for their swords, skill, and lives were at the command of those who could pay certainly, and well, irrespective of the employer's creed, colour, or race. Such payment covered all risks, physical, and spiritual, small though the latter must have been.

The known European Military Adventurers are separated into two divisions, or periods. The first dates from about 1608 to 1805 in which year the last of them disappeared with the Mahratta armies they had trained, then to be destroyed by Lords Lake and Wellesley. The second had but a brief existence, as compared with the first, and a much more limited scope, for, whereas the first covered all Hindustan, and existed for 200 years, the second was confined to Northern India, and existed for about thirty-six years only. Their end came with the downfall of the Sikh kingdom and the destruction of the army they had created for Ranjit Singh.

As early as 1609 we find Finch* mentioning that, preceded by the Red Cross, William Hawkins led 60 Europeans to a church service at Agra, the occasion being the baptism of two Moghul princes, who, having been promised Portuguese wives, had become Christians. These men were mostly English, and so necessary did Jehangir find their services, that he permitted them to openly distil strong waters, remarking in extenuation of this breach of Mahommedan law, that, "An Englishmen withouten stronge drinke is like a fysshe out of water." We shrewdly suspect that there was some personal element behind this permission, for Jehangir himself was a noble toper, and probably desired to share in the delectable produce of these connoisseurs of "strong waters."

* Early Travels in India, page 148.

Continuing onwards, we have casual mentions in the East India factory records of nameless Europeans "in the service of the Moghuls," until in 1649 we find* Peter Miller and Daniel Chester, together with a nameless Dutchman, serving the guns of "Ettamon Dowlet" at the siege of "Candahore, withoute whose aide itt wolde hardlie have been tayken," and whom the ungrateful Persians treated "right scurvelie and dismissed withoute recompense, an evill much reigninge amongst those fair tongued folke, who when their business is effected, remember not the actor, nor courtesie."

Sage reflections, which may well be applied to more occidental nations, *and their* soldiers in more recent times.

Niccolo Manucci, who himself served Dara Shikoh as a gunner, tells us that Shah Jehan and Aurungzeb had over 100 European gunners in their service, and gives the names of their master gunners as Thomas Roach and Reuben Smith, a statement corroborated by the factory records.† Though bearing good English names, the pair were rascals both, who attempted, though unsuccessfully, to despoil the friendless Venetian lad of his late master's effects.

Other names, cropping up from time to time are those of Jeremy Roote, William Smith, Clement Dowson,‡ James Taylor, Nathaniel Webb, James Lyons, and James Plaintain, a pirate king in Madagascar, before becoming chief gunner to Angria Pequena, the arch pirate of the Malabar coast.

In 1711 the report of a Dutch mission to Lahore shows John Wheeler, commander of the Feringhis, as receiving the emoluments of 20,000 horse, which, though it does not mean that his command was so numerous, shows that it was of considerable importance. Again in 1722, Clement Dowson mentions that the personal guard of the

* English Factory Records, page 267.

† Storia Di Mogor, Volume I, page 87.

‡ History of the Indian Wars, pages 101—121.

Emperor of Delhi consisted of 70 Europeans, " well paid and considered."*

To the most distant places did these men penetrate, in weary and toilsome journeys. How many fell by the way we may only surmise, but enough were left to serve in the Armies of Hindustan those of Mysore, Madras, Hyderabad, Bengal, the Deccan, the Carnatic, and even the remote Kangra valley, or the far off lands of Afghanistan and Khorasan. Mostly they lived and died as unobstrusively as they came, and are but little known, except when the soldiers they trained, or with whom they served, came into contact with the English. In some cases a kindly friend or employer, or occasionally a " nut brown begum," has raised a memorial to the memory of a friend, servant, or husband.

Most of the named tombs exist in Southern India, where such men were most numerous, but here and there in other parts, tradition points out the graves of unknown Europeans, who died far from their native land, serving princes whose names are now long forgotten.

Far away in the Kangra valley lies the tomb of William O'Brien, or Matthew Heaney, who commanded the Katoch Rajah's troops from 1812 to 1827, and with him lie the two other Europeans, who may be John MacDonald and Thomas Fukinaul, a Frenchman. Most extraordinary of all, Masson, the traveller, whose wanderings we shall briefly chronicle, records that in 1831 there still existed at Kabul a gravestone bearing the name of William (or John) Hicks, an artillery officer who died in the service of Aurungzeb, as far back as 1666.† The stone was seen by subsequent travellers up to the evacuation of Kabul by the British in 1841, but had disappeared when it was again searched for in 1879.

Of the earlier adventurers it is curious to note the preponderance of seafaring men, though this is natural,

* History of the Indian Wars, page 172.

† Masson: Travels in Baluchistan, Volume II, page 276.

for, until the advent of Stringer Lawrence, the soldiers of the Company were but mere factory guards, practising none but the most elementary of drill, and commanded by officers or sergeants of a most inferior stamp.

On the other hand, the seaman, by very reason of the exigencies of his profession, often calling for instant and self-reliant decision, was a superior man for adventurous work, and was, besides, usually a trained gunner, for the meshes of the naval press gang let but few escape. Even such as did were privateersmen, or pirates, usually synonymous terms, and as such were expert gunners.

Of such was George Thomas, and his conqueror, the French seaman or marine, Pierre Cuillier, who having risen to the command of Scindia's army, was virtually dictator of Hindustan, until the armies he commanded were overwhelmed and dispersed by Lake and Wellesley.

The prominence naturally given to the military transactions of the English in India would lead the ordinary person to believe that *these only* were of importance. This is wrong, for at all times, until the Pax Britannica prevailed, internecine strife was widespread, bloody, and ever existent amongst the various states, creeds and races, and it was on this account, and not that of prospective conflict with the British, that the Indian rulers and petty princes raised and maintained military forces of numbers varying with their resources.

The successes of the sepoys of Stringer Lawrence, Clive, and the French leaders in Southern India against untrained troops of vastly superior numbers, convinced all of the merits of the European system, and presently every owner of troops, great or small, became eager to engage men who could impart the necessary training and supply the leadership.

*Then* dawned the palmy days of the European adventurer, of any degree, who possessed the necessary skill and experience. From mere cannoneers, or may be

Master Gunners, these men were called forth to train battalions, command brigades, or even lead great armies, in fiercely fought battles of a magnitude quite comparable with European warfare.

All India below the Punjab was in the melting pot, each chief or adventurer who could raise a few armed men being out to take what he could, and hold it by force of arms. To meet the needs of such employers, there first arose Free Companies of mixed Asiatics and Europeans, the leaders and gunners being Europeans, and the horse and foot, Asiatics, united by the common hunger for fighting, and pay, or plunder. As with their European congeners of the Middle ages they fought, equally well, or may be badly, for an employer, or against him, when their term of agreement was completed.

The first of whom we find record is Walter Reinhardt, usually called Somru, or Sombre, an unspeakable scoundrel from Strasburg, who, commencing as a ship's carpenter in the French Navy, deserted from them to the English, and so backwards and forwards in the easy fashion of the times in India, when companies of French deserters were to be found fighting against their own nation, and English men in like manner*. Finally Somru became a trooper in the service of the Nawab of Oudh, and from thence formed a company of Free Companions whom he hired out to all and sundry who had the needful funds.

As an ally of Mir Kasim he took Patna from the English, and later, at the bidding of his employer, massacred over 200 English prisoners, killing some with his own hand. Yet this scoundrel evaded the pursuit of the avenging English and died peacefully in his bed at Agra after becoming a feudatory of the King of Delhi. The troops he had raised were left to his "manly" Begum, who held them together for over forty years, till

* Life of Lord Clive, Volume I, page 181; Life of Sir Eyre Coote, page 89.

she also died in the odour of sanctity, a firm friend of the English, who took over her territory and broke up her rabble army.

Other Companies were those of Madec, a Provencal and ex-pirate, Thomas, Finglas, Boyd, and Bristol. The first was contemporary with Sombre, amassed a great fortune, with which he retired to Europe there to be killed in a duel. Of Thomas we shall write later, and of the others occasional mentions will be found in the military history of India during the Eighteenth Century.

The example of the comparative efficiency of these companies induced the princes and nobles, who occasionally hired them, to employ European instructors for their own troops, and very soon such service became the haven of every adventurous, or vagabond European, whose only capital was a stout heart, a strong personality, and some military knowledge.

Of all sorts and conditions were they, and of as varied nations. English, Irish, Scots, French, Germans, Greeks, Americans, Eurasians, and even Jews, all found shelter and liberal paymasters under weird flags, and occasionally quaint employers. Of the many who bore British names, a goodly proportion were Eurasians.

Of such were Skinner, Hopkins, the Smith Brothers, Villiers, Stuart, Hearsey, Birch, and countless others, most of whom were good soldiers One indeed, Skinner, attained high and deserved rank in the British Army, and has perpetuated his name by a fine regiment of Indian Horse, which bears a record second to none.

Of the lower ranks Skinner records that in the great battle of Malpura, between Scindia and Holkar, 80 English and Eurasian gunners died at their guns.

As varied as the men, were their fates. Many died in battle, more of drink and disease. A few amassed wealth by fair or foul means, and attained the longed-for goal of retirement to their own country in affluence.

Yet, even of the fortunates, the end was varied. Some lived long and died honoured, whilst to others their wealth was a source of anxiety and the cause of enmity during life and bitter strife after death. But the great majority shared the ordinary fate of the soldier of fortune of all times in an alternation of comparative wealth and extreme poverty during health and vigour, ending with a violent death in strife or battle, or an old age of exile and proverty.

Such were those, who, long before Kipling wrote of "Sergeant What's 'is Name" who

> Drilled a black man white,
> And made a coward fight,

performed the like seeming miracle on material as unpromising as that the Sergeant worked upon, and with less advantages, for the one had but his own personality, whilst behind the other were British battalions, and the prestige of a great and victorious nation. Usually the ruder the personality of the adventurer the more successful he was, for those who had held officer's ranks in other armies were useless without the resources to enforce discipline they could have commanded in those services, unless like De Boigne, and Ranjit Singh's French generals, they had passed through the rude school of the ranks, or served with irregulars.

Behind the adventurer always loomed the shadow of a violent death or disgraceful treatment at the hands of his soldiers, who might, and occasionally did, visit upon him their rancour at defeat, privations, or arrears of pay. As much a potential danger was the employer, who, should his commander promise to become powerful or dangerous, would endeavour to remove him by murder or assassination.

Most of the important adventurers were Frenchmen, as was to be expected from the subjects of a nation usually at war with the English, always hostile to them, and, therefore, to be trusted. Such a preference was thrust upon the Indian employer by the British practice of recalling all

their nationals in such services when hostilities threatened or broke out. Therefore, the employer, as in the case of the Mahrattas, lost the services of many of their European officers, just when these men would have been most useful.

The careers of the men of the earlier group are fairly easy to trace, there being much material at hand in the memoirs of Thomas, Skinner, and Ferdinand Smith's book on the European officers who served Holkar and Scindia. There are also mentions in the Government Records and the histories of the Wars in Hindustan, Bengal, Madras, Mysore and the Deccan.

But, for those of the second group, no such easy material is forthcoming, and though we have explored every conceivable source, our histories, or memoirs are not so complete as we would wish. These men lived and served in Northern India, within countries whose frontiers were most jealously guarded both by their rulers and the British. Little news escaped from them, such as did filter through being from spies, the diaries of casual travellers, or from the paid news writers at the various courts, whose lives being in the hands of those about whom they wrote, were naturally cautious about letting distasteful intelligence pass through.

We have laid under contribution the whole of the British records from 1805 upwards, concerning Northern India, the originals of which lie in the old Tomb of Anarkali, once the residence of Ventura; the hitherto unpublished vernacular diaries of Ranjit Singh's Court, the pay lists of the Khalsa army from 1811 upwards, and the books of the many travellers who passed through the Punjab in the third and fourth decades of the 19th century.

Yet even after a most careful search some will remain unknown, or shadowy personages, for owing to British jealousy at the employment of Europeans in Indian states many crept secretly across the Sutlej or through Bahawalpur. Others again, and these the most important, came

overland, passing through many vicissitudes, of which examples may be found in Court's Diary, as given in the Appendix.

Another difficulty occurs through the practice of Ranjit Singh of putting the men on the pay-rolls of his feudatory rajahs, even though retaining them in his own service. Unlike the existing Khalsa pay-rolls, which are complete, those of the feudatory rajahs, have long since disappeared, and only by accident do we discover that such men existed. Yet we have collected enough to furnish some idea of the lives and adventures of a type of man long since vanished and impossible to exist again, unless the British quit India, when assuredly the European military adventurer will again stand forth.

The histories of some are inextricably bound up with the bloodiest events of the Punjab Anarchy, and as these are unfolded there will be revealed stories of atrocities, murders, assassinations, and kindred horrors, seemingly incredible to those who only know of the ordered British rule of to-day.

Some of their known histories are interesting enough, but what of those which only flit across the page for a brief moment, such as Rattray, a renegade who called himself Fida Mahomed Khan, or Mahomed Khan, *alias* William Lee, said to have been an *ex*-officer of the 19th Dragoons, who, after shooting his captain dead, fled into Khorassan, where he became a Mahomedan and served Mahmud Shah for twenty years, before turning up at Ranjit Singh's court with a full blown scheme to conquer Sindh! What we know of Rattray and Lee is interesting enough, but that which was contained in the history of the former which he entrusted to Alexander Burnes, with whom it was burnt at Kabul, would be, as Burnes said, "wildly interesting."

We have Masson, a man of high education, and an ever restless traveller, who spent nine years wandering, a penniless mendicant, through Sindh, Persia, Khorassan

and Afghanistan, making historical and archæological discoveries which were the means of revealing the existence of hitherto unknown dynasties of the Græco-Bactrian period. We have the renegade Gardiner, whose own history was weird enough, but not nearly so extravagant as that which he pieced together from other histories, and foisted on to Temple, Durand and Pearce, who fathered his Rougemontic narrative into a romantic book.

There is another renegade, Lawrence, *alias* Mahomed Sadiq, who served both Shah Shujah and Ranjit Singh; the cashiered officer McPherson, who for many years served the Nawab of Bahawalpur, and died gallantly at Sadulapur, fighting under Herbert Edwards; Argoud, the Frenchman, of whom Burnes and Wood have left amusing accounts; the defaulting paymaster Ford of the 16th Foot; John Brown, and the other deserters who fought against us in the First Sikh War; the Irishman Kanara, and the sturdy old Eurasian, John Holmes, both of whom met a terrible fate at the hands of their troops during the anarchy.

We will tell you of Matthew Heaney, or William O'Brien, the last of the commanders in the service of the minor rajahs, who, after cutting down an officer of the 24th Dragoons (later the 19th Hussars), fled into Kangra, and there raised an independent army for Sansar Chand, the Katoch rajah, became administrator of his domains and died worth Rs. 60,000, a substantial fortune for a private soldier, who had drawn but eightpence a day.

What tales could be written around such men by a Kipling-like genius! In the hope that what we now place before you may find one, we have rescued, and set down, from equally forgotten books and records, what we could find concerning this long vanished and romantic class of men.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EUROPEAN OFFICERS OF RANJIT SINGH'S ARMY

The position of the European officers employed by Ranjit Singh in a military capacity was peculiar and precarious, and in no way to be compared with that of their equals in the European armies.

From the highest to the lowest, *all* were temporary employees, whose entertainment, tenure of office, pay, and promotion were entirely dependent upon the impression they made upon the Maharajah at the time of their appointment, or may be the whim of the moment, or the manner in which they performed their duties thereafter, or kept his favour. Sometimes most unlikely men were engaged. Others who appeared to be eminently suited for the employment they desired were dismissed with scant ceremony. Yet, on the whole, Ranjit's judgment was seldom at fault, and those whom he engaged usually justified it.

Some of the more important were required to sign regular agreements, which, however, were very one-sided, for, the Maharajah disregarded them should a man offend him or prove unsuitable. In both cases he took care that the men should leave his dominions, and sent an armed escort to set them across the river into British territory or the Afghan border. The agreement bound the men *" to domesticate themselves in the country by marriage, not to eat beef, nor smoke tobacco in public, to permit their beards to grow, to take care not to offend against the Sikh religion, and if required, to fight against their own country."

The method of selection was searching, for after the candidate had been accepted, he was given a batch of

* Punjab Records, Book 95, Letter No. 83.

perfectly raw recruits, and a specified time in which to train them. During this period, the candidates were given an allowance varying in amount with their social status, and the grade aspired to. The actual pay was fixed after the men had passed the test, and this again was a matter of considerable haggling, for Ranjit Singh never paid more than he could possibly help.

There was no certainty as to what might be given, for battalion commands varied from Rs. 150 to even Rs. 1,000 and inferior appointments from Rs. 60 to Rs. 350. There were no fixed leave rules, and those who took leave were usually compelled to resign and take the chance of re-instatement on their return, the idea being to prevent men from obtaining a period of idleness on full pay. However, in some cases the arrears of pay were given if the men had been satisfactory and returned in due time.

But few ever asked for leave. Those who did were mostly the Frenchmen, for the others were mainly homeless wanderers, or had substantial reasons for not re-entering British territory. Ventura and Allard took a couple of years' leave, but Avitabile and Court served throughout.

The superior officers were, as with the Adventurers of the first period, mostly Continentals. The only British born who attained battalion commands under Ranjit Singh were Foulkes, Ford, and the Eurasian John Holmes. A number of the deserter class did command battalions and batteries, but only in the armies of the feudatory Rajahs. The military titles by which the men were distinguished usually carried no significance, for they were mostly self-conferred, there being no regular gazette or gradation or promotion.

The only ranks that were actually conferred by the Maharajah were those of General* on Court and Ventura. Allard and Avitabile were courtesy generals during his

* Army of Ranjit Singh (Sita Ram), page 214.

lifetime, though the latter was awarded the title by Sher Singh on the latter's accession to the *gaddi*. No Europeans were ever allowed to become very powerful, nor were their brigades permitted to be present in Lahore at the one time, two being always on the Frontiers, and the other employed in minor expeditions or revenue collecting.

Though the principal officers were required to attend durbar, they were not permitted a seat, nor were they ever consulted on affairs of State, other than those concerning the districts of which they might have civil charge. The frontispiece of this work shows the four French generals in durbar, and their position the estimation in which they were held. The first is Allard, who was always a favourite with the Maharajah; the second Court, the third Ventura, and the fourth Avitabile, who often wore an Afghan *puggri*. It may also be noted that, as with the other durbaris, all wore empty scabbards, a proof of Ranjit Singh's distrust of everybody.

Artillery was not under the control of the brigade commanders until after Ranjit Singh's death, nor were the Generals ever allowed independent command. In all expeditions or wars on the frontier, the control, even though it might be merely nominal, was vested in a Sikh prince or noble, and, at different times, to take an example, Ventura and Court served under Sher Singh, Hari Singh Nalwa, Dhian Singh, or Gulab Singh. Some writers have styled Ventura Commander-in-Chief of the Khalsa army, and also Chief Judge of Lahore; but there is nothing in the official records to show that he ever held those posts.

Certainly, Fakir Kumr-ud-Din* says that Sher Singh conferred the title of Commander-in-Chief on Ventura in gratitude for his services at and after the first siege of Lahore Fort, but if so, the title was merely honorary, for he never exercised the functions; nor was he Chief Judge. The Kazi of Lahore was a Mussalman, and the only claim

* Letter to Sir Edward Maclagan, dated 3rd August 1900.

that Ventura had to this title was that he was deputed to restore order in the city after the fall of Lahore Fort.

In addition to their military commands, Ventura and Avitabile held civil charges, the former of the Multan district after its subjection, until he went on leave, and Avitabile that of Wazirabad, and later Peshawar, until the end of his service. Harlan, the American, was Governor of Jesrota, and later of Gujrat, but he never held any military office in addition. John Holmes was Governor of Gujrat after Harlan, and others of the better class of European were occasionally employed in settling revenue or boundary disputes, their impartiality being taken as natural.

One only attained great wealth. This was Avitabile, who held civil charge of a great district and in addition drew high military pay. Of how he made money we shall tell later. Ventura, though he also held charge of a civil district, does not appear to have accumulated much, although he retired with a comfortable competence, in addition to the £25,000 paid him by the British as compensation for the jagirs awarded him by Ranjit Singh. Allard died poor, and Court, who was a saving man of retiring disposition, also departed with sufficient to keep him in comfort for the remainder of his life.

The others could not have saved much, nor indeed were any of them ever placed in positions that would enable them to do so. Though many were paid quite high salaries, they could not save much from them, for the Maharajah insisted upon their keeping up a style of living he considered commensurate with their position and his own dignity. The salaries of all were many months in arrears and it is doubtful whether most of them were ever paid up in full.

The actual number of Europeans who from time to time trained the Khalsa army can only be conjectured, for reasons we have already stated. There were certainly over 100, but of these the deserter class were the most

numerous; and naturally took care to efface themselves when European observers were about. Yet, during the later period, just before Ranjit Singh's death, they were not so careful, for when Sir Harry Fane, the Commander-in-Chief in India, inspected the Maharajah's artillery in 1837, he commented upon the number of white faces to be seen amongst the battery officers.

Let us conclude this general sketch with Major McGregor's opinion of the work of the more obscure adventurers, particularly those who had served in the British forces.

* "These men were of infinite service to the Sikhs in training their gunners, and the conduct of the latter in the battles of the Sikh war showed that their labours had not been in vain."

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* McGregor's History of the Sikhs, Volume II, page 141.

# CHAPTER III

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARMY OF RANJIT SINGH

In order to appreciate the value of the work done by the European officers employed by Ranjit Singh, it is necessary to preface their memoirs with a brief sketch of the army as it was when Ranjit Singh succeeded to a petty chieftainship, and to show its gradual evolution into that fighting machine which offered the English the fiercest resistance they had yet encountered from Indian soldiers.

At the period mentioned, the Sikh fighting men were, as they had been since the commencement, mere mobs of predatory horsemen forming a religious theocracy. They were divided into twelve divisions, called *misls*, the numbers being estimated at from 60,000 to 75,000 men, the latter including a number of footmen, who were, however, perhaps justly, regarded as negligible. The first estimate is that of George Thomas, an adventurer who, being eternally at feud with the Sikhs, and having invaded their country a number of times, may be judged to have had a fair knowledge of their numbers.

The second is that of Prinsep,* a reliable and painstaking historian, and as the difference between the two is not irreconcilable, we will accept Prinsep's tabulated statement :—

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bhangi Misl | ... | ... | 10,000 | men. |
| Ramgarhia Misl | ... | ... | 3,000 | ,, |
| Ghunnaya Misl | ... | ... | 8,000 | ,, |
| Nukreea Misl | ... | ... | 2,000 | ,, |
| Ahluwalia Misl | ... | ... | 3,000 | ,, |
| Daleela Misl | ... | ... | 7,500 | ,, |
| Nishan-Wala Misl | ... | ... | 12,000 | ,, |
| Fuzulpoorea | ... | ... | 2,500 | ,, |
| Krora-Singha | ... | ... | 12,000 | ,, |
| Shahid & Nahung | ... | ... | 2,000 | ,, |
| Phulkea & Bhykea | ... | ... | 5,000 | ,, |
| Sukar Chakia | ... | ... | 2,500 | ,, |
| | Grand Total | ... | 69,500 | ,, |

* Prinsep's Ranjit Singh, page 29.

Neither Thomas nor Prinsep speak of artillery for the simple reason that none such existed, with the exception of zumburaks (or camel-guns) of about 1¼″ bore. Indeed, ordnance of any size would have been an encumbrance to such a force as the Sikhs brought to the field.

The offensive arms of the commonalty were matchlock, spear and sword, and their defensive armour merely a shield, supplemented in winter by a thickly wadded coat, serving the double protection of defence and warmth. The leaders carried no matchlock, its place being taken by pistols and a bow—the latter a symbol of rank, which was retained by the Sikh nobles and rajahs until the end. They alone were usually armoured in chain-mail, with steel caps, back and breast plates, arm-guards, gauntlets and shields.

Their tactics are thus described by Forster, and as Thomas supplements his description, we may quote both. Forster writes* :—

"A party of some forty to fifty men advance at a quick pace up to the distance of a carbine shot from the enemy, and halting discharge their pieces; when speedily retiring a hundred paces or so they reload and repeat the same method of annoying the enemy. The horses have been so trained to the performance of this operation, that on receiving a stroke of the hand they halt from a full career."

Thomas's description amplifies the above† :—

" After performing the requisite duties of their religion by ablution and prayer, the Sikhs comb their beards and hair with peculiar care. Mounting their horses they ride forth towards the enemy with whom they engage in a continual skirmish, advancing and retiring until men and horses are equally tired. They then draw off for a distance from the enemy, until meeting with cultivated ground they permit their horses to graze, whilst they parch a little grain for themselves. After satisfying nature in this frugal manner they renew the skirmishing if the enemy is near. Should he have retreated they follow up and renew these tactics.

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* Forster's Travels, page 332.

† Memoirs of George Thomas, pages 71—8.



Mounted Akali or Nihung, Anarchy Period.

"Seldom indulging in the comforts of a tent whilst in the enemy's country, the repast of a Sikh cannot be supposed to be either sumptuous, or elegant. Seated on the ground with a mat spread before them, a Brahmin appointed for the purpose serves out a portion of food to each person, the cakes of flour which they eat during the meal serving them in the room of plates and dishes. Accustomed from their earliest infancy to a life of hardship and difficulty, the Sikh despises the comforts of a tent. In lieu of this, each horseman is furnished with two blankets, one for himself, and one for the horse.

"These blankets, which are placed beneath the saddle, and a grain bag and heel rope, comprise in war the whole baggage of a Sikh. Their cooking utensils are carried on ponies. Considering this mode of life and the extraordinary rapidity of their marches, it cannot be a wonder if they perform marches, which to those accustomed only to European warfare, must seem incredible."

Such were the men and methods of the Sikh forces during the latter part of the 18th century, and so the bulk remained until many years later. Even when Ranjit Singh had attained his object of creating an army on the European model, the old style continued in the Ghorchars, who formed the mass of the mounted forces of the Khalsa army.

Early in his career Ranjit Singh conceived the idea of welding the disorderly components of the Khalsa theocracy into one great kingdom under his own rule, and, that accomplished, of extending his dominion at the expense of the states and countries bordering on the Punjab. The subjugation of the other clans and the scattered Mahomedan states of the Punjab, was not a hard task, for this born military genius, who in addition, was destitute of any of the encumbering principles of fair play, open dealing, or adherence to a pledged word, if he could evade, or refuse its observance.

Having subjugated his own countrymen, he realised that the second task would require troops differing from the heterogeneous and part-time levies at his command,

for the Sikh horseman was primarily an agriculturist, though a fine fighting man at will, or in time of need. That the troops he desired could be formed by the material at hand, he was well aware, for the echoes of the great battles fought for Indian Princes by their European trained troops had soon reached him, and he must have heard first hand tales of their exploits from the many Punjabis who had fought in their ranks and of the successes of the men trained, and led by George Thomas. And he had example close at hand in the manner in which this small trained band had swept aside, or routed the disorderly horsemen of the Cis-Sutlej States.

He had also seen soldiers trained by European adventurers, for when Holkar, flying before Lord Lake had entered the Punjab, he brought his surviving trained battalions and advised Ranjit Singh to form similar ones. He had also seen Lake's sepoys, halted on the left bank of the Beas, and a final impression was made by the quick rally, and successful defence of the sepoys of Metcalfe's escort at Amritsar in 1809, when suddenly attacked by Akalis.

Though Ranjit Singh determined to emulate these examples, the project progressed slowly, both for want of equipment, and men who would consent to serve on foot, a method of fighting which the true Sikh had an almost invincible objection to, and contempt for. Hence the first rude battalions he formed were almost entirely composed of Hindustanis, Gurkhas, Afghans, Purbeahs, Dogras, Katoches, and Punjabi Musulmans. Even to the end such classes formed more than half of the Khalsa army, especially in the artillery and the *nujeebs*. The only battalions exclusively composed of Sikhs were the Fauj-i-Ain, or regular brigades, under the French generals.

Under Ranjit Singh, the Khalsa army was divided into two divisions, the main being that under his own personal payment, and the other under the feudatory forces belonging to Gulab Singh, Sham Singh, Hari

Singh, Dhyan Singh, Suchet Singh, Hira Singh, and others. His own army was divided into the Fauj-i-Ain, or true regular army, the Fauj-i Sawara, or Ghorcharrahs, and the Fauj-i-Kilafat, the latter comprising the garrisons of forts, treasure guards, fort-guards, and peons or orderlies. The troops under the feudatory chiefs were called the Fauj-i-Jaghirdari, from the fact that they were maintained by fiefs granted for military service.

Both divisions comprised drilled infantry and artillery, but only the Fauj-i-Ain maintained cavalry on European models. But even these were exotic, only maintained to provide employment for Allard and to complete the three arms customary in a European army. Ranjit Singh always held them in small estimation, hence they fluctuated greatly, sometimes almost dying out and at others being resuscitated to quite a number of regiments more or less efficient. They comprised at different periods, lancers, cuirassiers, and dragoons. Skinner* the famous irregular, spoke very scornfully of them, as did Lieut. Fane, who remarked that at a review he witnessed it was difficult to say which made the worst exhibition, Allard himself, or his cavalry. Osborne who saw them a year later, remarks :—

† "I took the opportunity of looking at Allard's cavalry, two regiments of which were on parade. They were the first of them I had met with, and I was much disappointed with them and their appearance. They did not look to advantage by the side of the infantrymen. They were men of all ages, ill-looking, and worse mounted and dressed. Neither in appearance, nor in reality are they to be compared with the infantry soldier of the Punjab. The reason appears to be that Ranjit personally inspects every recruit for his infantry, whilst the cavalry are recruited from the followings of the different sirdars, and mostly owe their appointment to favour or interest, rather than to their fitness or capability. From what I

* Life of James Skinner, Volume II, page 214.

† Osborne: Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh, page 165.

hear, General Allard's intentions have been so limited that the same success has not attended his efforts as those of Ventura with the infantry."

Yet, something seems to have occurred within the next year, or the troops of the brigades on the frontier must have been much better looked after, for Barr, in 1839, writes :

*" After inspecting the guns, we reached the Cavalry on the left of which were the dragoons. These were well mounted and a fine body of men. On the right stood two regiments of Allard's cuirassiers, the most noble looking men on parade. The men and horses were all picked, and amongst the former were to be seen many stalwart fellows, who showed to advantage beneath their steel caps and cuirasses. Many of the officers wear brass cuirasses, and their commandant (Mouton) is perhaps the finest man on parade, and looks extremely well in front of his superb regiments. It used to be poor Allard's pride to review these men, and their present martial appearance is, no doubt, due to his constant care and superintendence.

" The uniform consisted of a short blue coat and a pair of dark trousers with a narrow red stripe tightly strapped over Wellington boots and spurs. The cuirass was of highly polished steel, or brass, and bore a Gallic cock in the centre of the breast plate. The head-dress was a round steel cap from the apex of which sprung a red horse hair plume. From the cap depended a curtain of chain mail, which hung down over the neck and shoulders. The arms consisted of a flint-lock carbine, and a long steel sword depending from the waist-belt by steel chains. A black leather waist-belt, and a pouch belt completed the very effective outfit.

" Besides the cuirassiers, there were two regiments of dragoons on parade. The dress of these consisted of a jacket of dull red with broad facings of buff, crossed in front by a pair of black belts, one of which supported a bayonet, and the other a pouch, genuine Dragoon equipment, in which the Sikh cavalry fought, as the old gibe had it, *indifferent*, on horse or on foot. Round the waist the dragoon wore a red *cummerbund*, partially concealed

* Journal of a March, etc., pages 213 and 245.

by a black sword belt, from which hung a sabre with a brass hilt, and leather scabbard. The carbine was so attached as to give it the appearance of being slung across the back of the dragoon, but in fact it rested in a bucket attached to the saddle.

"The trousers were of dark blue with a red stripe, and the turbans of crimson silk, brought to a point in front, and ornamented in the centre by a small brass half moon, from which sprung a glittering sprig about two inches in height. The officers were clad from top to toe in crimson silk and armed with a sabre only."

Before quitting the mounted forces of the Khalsa, let us quote from a contemporary account the appearance of the crack corps of the Ghorcharrahs, who were the real permanent cavalry of the Khalsa army. Baron Hugel, who visited Lahore in 1836, writes :—

* "I requested leave to inspect the Ghorchars, and never beheld a finer, nor more remarkably striking body of men. Each was dressed differently, and yet so much in the same fashion that they all looked in perfect keeping. The handsome Raja, Suchet Singh, commander of one of the great divisions, was in a similar costume, and reminded me of the time when the fate of empires hung on the point of a lance, and when the individual whose bold heart beat fearlessly under his steel breastplate was the sole founder of his fortunes.

"The strange troops before me was particularly Indian. The uniform consisted of a velvet coat, or gaberdine, over which most of them wore a shirt of mail. Others had this shirt made to form part of the tunic. A belt round the waist, richly embroidered in gold, supported the powder horn, also covered with cloth of gold. In this belt were also carried a Khatar, and the pistol which most carried in addition to the other weapons. Some wore a steel helmet inlaid with gold and surmounted with a black heron plume. Others wore a cap of steel worked like a cuirass in rings.

"The left arm was often covered with a steel cuff inlaid with gold, reaching from the hand to the elbow. The round Sikh shield hung on the back, fastened with

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* Hugel's Travels in Kashmir, etc., page 331.

straps across the chest. A quiver at the right side, and a bow slung over the left arm were also carried as part of the equipment. A bag in the belt holds the balls, and a tall bayonet held in the right hand, when on foot and carried over the shoulder when mounted, completed the dress."

Yet even here opinions differ, for Henry Lawrence, who lived for many years in the Punjab, thus describes the irregular horseman of the Khalsa army only a few years later :—

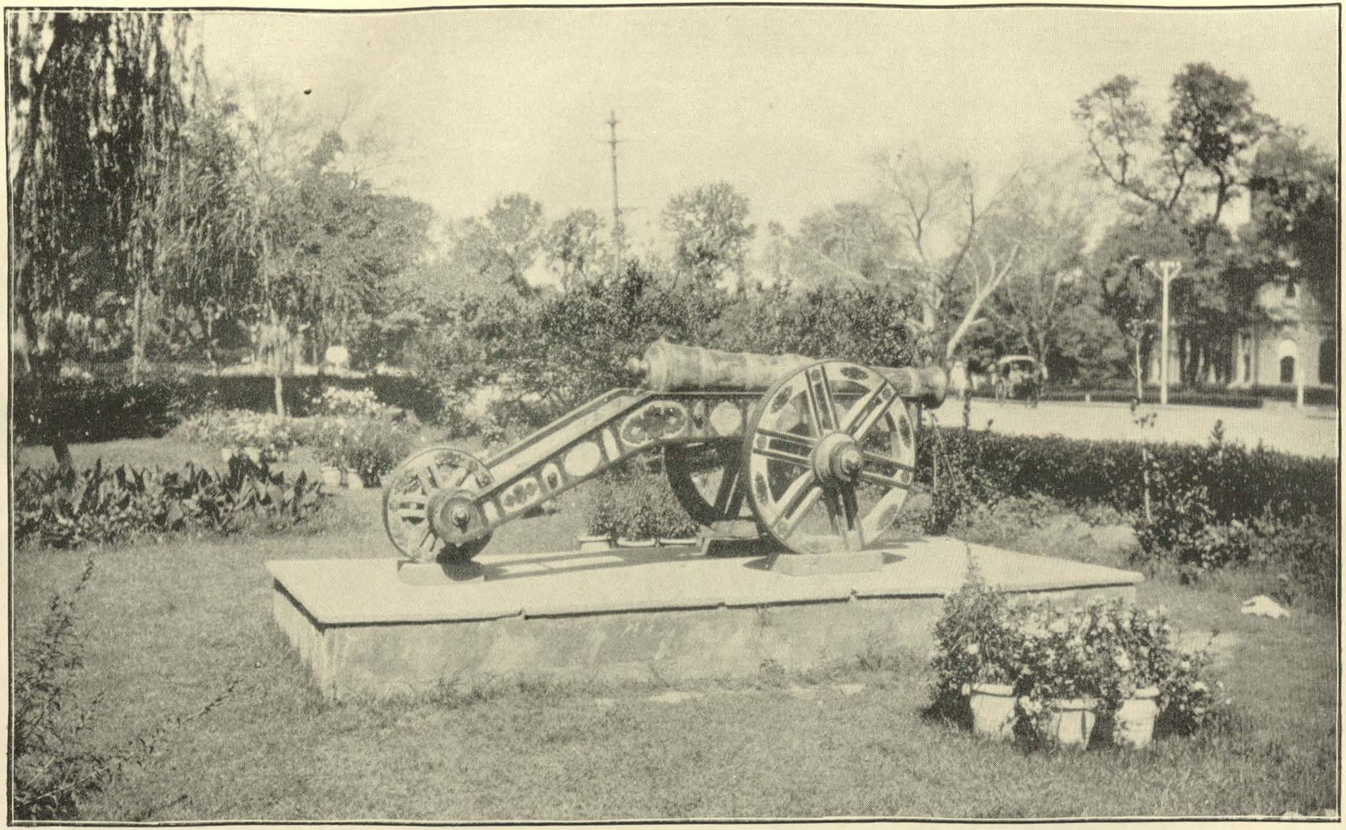
**1843.*—" Go to the bazaar. Take any dirty naked scoundrel. Twist up his hair, give him a lofty turban and a clean vest. Put a clumsy sword by his side and a long spear into his cowardly hand. Mount him on a strong clumsy two year old, and you have a passable Sikh soldier."

The average Ghorcharrah probably stood midway between the two.

We now turn to the artillery. From the earliest times, Ranjit Singh's ambition had been to accumulate such a force, and with this object he had commenced to drag after him every gun he could collect, no matter what size or in what condition. The result was that a most miscellaneous collection of ordnance of all sizes, ranging from the 9″ Zam-zammah to the 1″ or $1\frac{1}{4}$″ zumburak. Here it should be remembered that with the decay of the Moghul power, the manufacture of cannon, at one time well known in the Punjab, which had produced some remarkable specimens, had almost completely died out, and the existing cannon were relics from that period.

However, by 1811, Ranjit Singh had collected thirty-nine guns, formed into batteries of heavy, medium, and light guns, and fairly uniform in quality. Artillery was always a matter of great jealousy with the Maharajah, who kept it entirely under his own control, nor was it till just before his death, that the European and Indian generals were permitted to have complete control over the batteries attached to their brigades. The training was

* Adventurers in the Punjab, page 6.



Sikh Battalion Gun.

carried out by European and Indian deserters from the Company's army. The first European artilleryman who joined Ranjit Singh did so in 1809, and it was not until 1836 or so that the Frenchmen were allowed to introduce their own system of gun-drill.

The art of cannon founding was revived at Lahore, and, under the supervision of Court, who for a time held charge, reached an excellence quite equal, if not superior, to that of the English guns which formed their main models. Cannon of all sizes, from the howitzer to the three pounder, were manufactured in the foundry within the fort, and the training of the individual artilleryman carried out at the same place, under the supervision of a man named Brown, or Potter aided by other deserters.

Whatever the respective shares in the development of Ranjit Singh's artillery by Court, Brown, or the other deserters, the work was well done, as the following extract from Osborne testifies :—

* "*June 1838.*—I accompanied the Maharajah to his practice ground. Here I found twelve horse artillery guns of different calibres, all tolerably well horsed and equipped. These guns are the refuse of his artillery, and only used to accompany him when he marched. His great depôt is at Lahore, and is said to be very superior, and decidedly his best arm, and the one he takes most interest in. He was trying his own shells. At 500 yards the practice was indifferent but at 800 and 1,200 it was excellent. Many of the shells exploded just over the curtain."

†Two days later, he again writes :—

"The Maharajah is very proud of the efficiency and admirable condition of his artillery, and justly so, for no native power has yet possessed so well organised and large a force. At sunrise I waited upon the Maharajah, according to appointment, to see the practice of his artillery. There were 13 brass nine-pounders upon the ground protected by two squadrons of regular cavalry, under Rajah Dhian Singh. After manœuvring for about an hour and

* Osborne: Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh, page 164.
† Osborne: Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh, page 160.

executing several of the simpler movements with considerable steadiness and precision, they commenced practising with grape at a curtain at 200 yards' distance. At the first round of grape, the curtain was cut clean away, and their shells at 800 and 1,200 yards were thrown with a precision that is extraordinary, when the short period of time since which they have known even the existence of such a thing is taken into consideration."

This last remark is incorrect, for shells had been presented with the two guns given by Lord William Bentinck at the conference at Rupar in 1831. Not only this, but Court had cast shells in pewter and brass, in the year 1832, receiving a reward of Rs. 5,000 from Ranjit Singh for the first shell he presented.

Lieut. Barr, who passed through Peshawar in 1839, thus speaks of the artillery attached to Court's brigade* :—

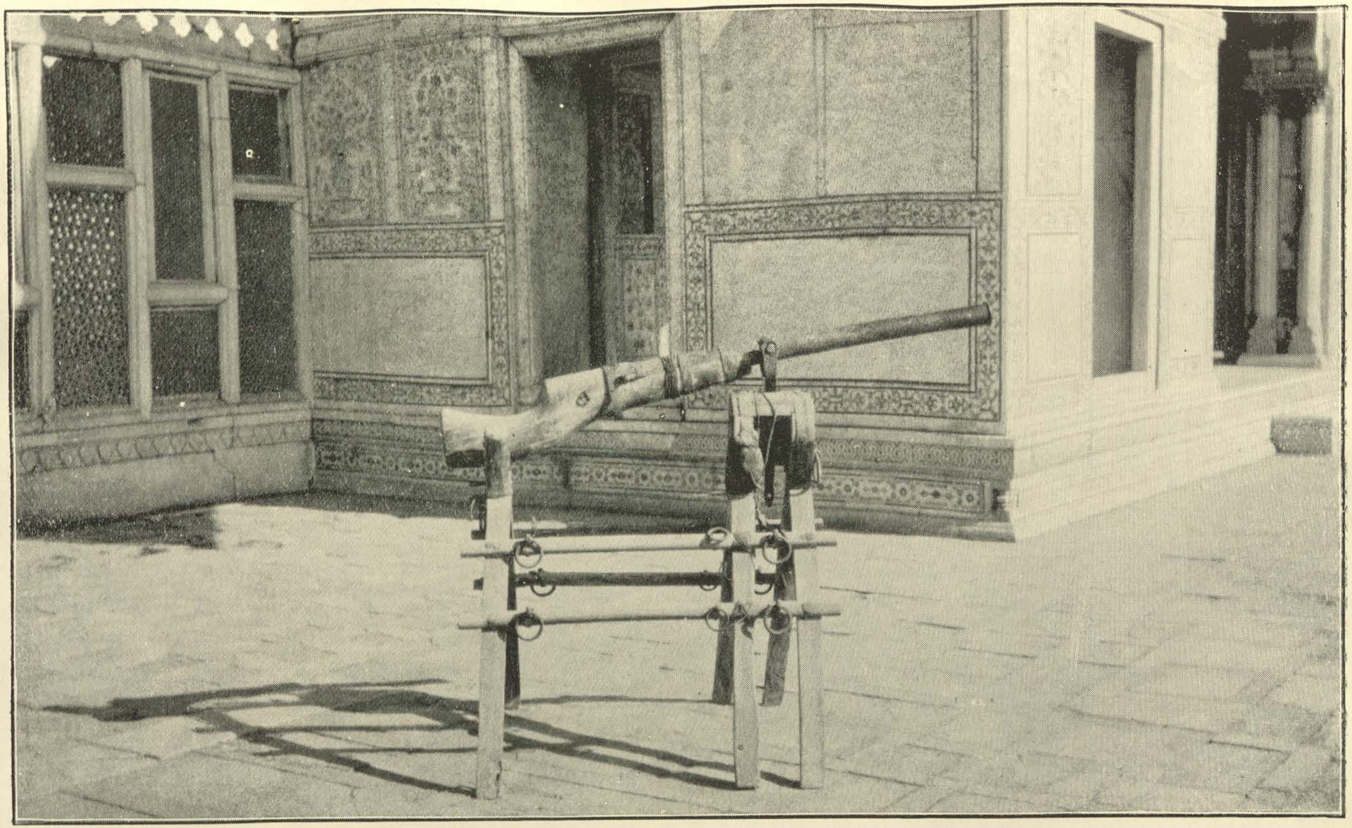
"On our arriving at the guns General Court directed the native commandant, a fine looking soldier-like man, handsomely accoutred, to put them through their drill. The orders were given in French and the system of gunnery used by that nation has been adopted. At the conclusion of the exercise we walked down the line and inspected the guns. The two on the right were those presented by Lord William Bentinck, and the rest were nine-pounders cast from that model.

"All the shot were formed from beaten iron, and cost a rupee each, and the majority of the shells of pewter, which he told us answered very well.

"The men dress something like our horse artillery, except that instead of helmets they wear red turbans, the officers' being of silk, which hang down to cover the back part of the neck, white trousers with long boots, black waist and cross belts, and black scabbards with brass mountings."

We now take up the infantry. In the year 1811, Ranjit Singh's battalions of so-called disciplined infantry had increased to six, and these were, by 1820, augmented

* Journal of a March, pages 259-60.



ZUMBARAK OR CAMEL GUN, BORE 1½″.

to a dozen, numbering in all 8,000 men. It was in the latter year that we find the first European instructor to the Khalsa infantry in the person of an Eurasian adventurer named Gordon, who was employed to train recruits, and afterwards given command of a battalion. But before this Ranjit Singh had had experience of, and employed the services of European trained troops, as will be seen from the memoirs of O'Brien and James, whose infantry and artillery he employed before 1820 at Multan and Bilaspur.

Actually, the reform of the Khalsa infantry dates from the arrival of Ventura and Allard in 1822, and, correctly speaking, the brigades under the French generals and Oms and the battalions commanded by other European adventurers were the *élite* of the Khalsa army. The battalions of Ventura's brigade, with the exception of one of Gurkhas, were exclusively Sikhs, and those of the others had two or more companies of pure Sikhs, the remainder being Hindustanis or Punjabi Musulmans, etc.

The uniform of the Regular Infantry was British in pattern and colour. With the exception of the so-called Gurkha battalions, the Khalsa soldiery steadfastly refused to wear the ungainly shako then used by the English soldiers, and perforce were permitted to retain their national turban. Usually the Regular Brigades, in full dress wore red coats and white trousers, their cross belts differing from the English in being black instead of white, with the exception of the Gurkhas who wore green jackets faced with red similar to the English Rifle Regiments of the period.

How the efforts of the European officers succeeded, the following will show:—

*Havelock, 1838.*—*"At the review, Ranjit Singh displayed seven battalions of infantry, and four regiments of cavalry, with as many troops of horse artillery in the intervals of brigades and half brigades. His foot were

* Havelock's War in Afghanistan, Volume I, page 85.

formed three deep, and manœuvred as instructed by their French officers, carrying their arms with a bent elbow (sloped), and beating distinctly with the foot, the slower time of their shorter paced quick march, as might be seen at a review in the Champs de Mars. The drums and fifes assembled in the centre of the batallions, guided and gave animation to each change of position.

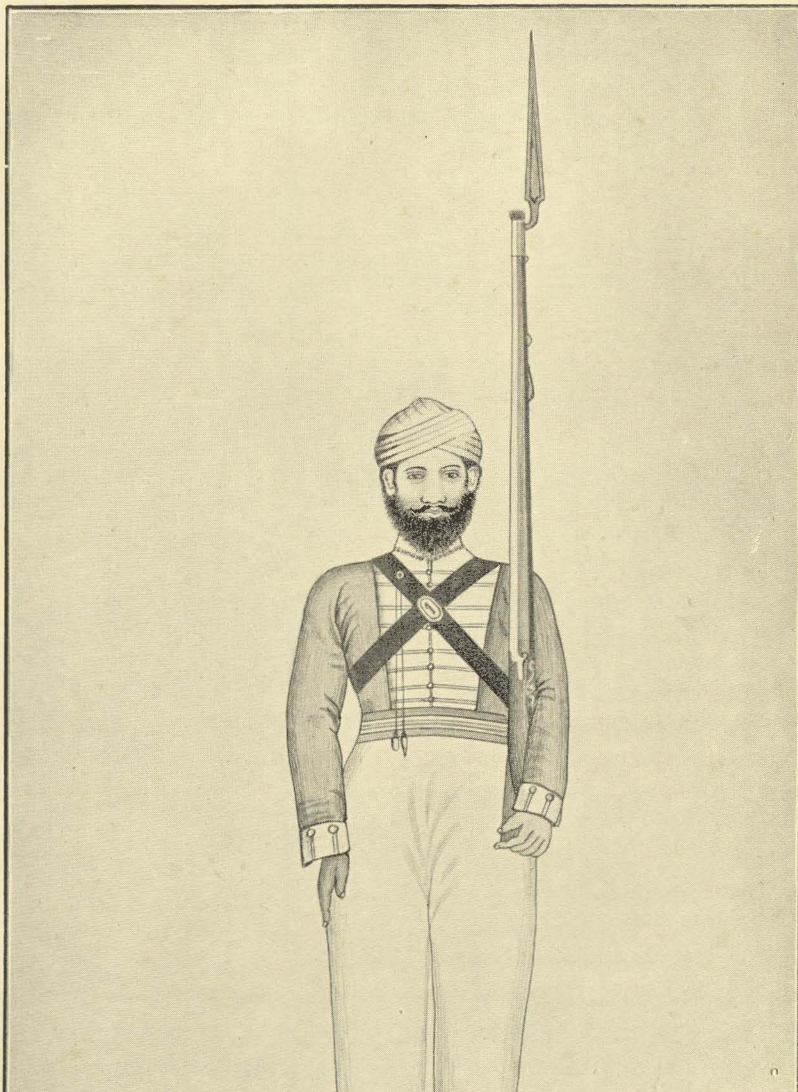
" From the commencement of the review, the Brigade D'elite which was distinguished by white trousers, was thrown into line, and supported every evolution of the first brigade, and if criticism could point out that the whole force, as compared with European standards, was indifferently equipped, the cavalry poorly mounted, and the artillery ill-harnessed; on the other hand, it could not be denied that here was a considerable force, which proved its general acquaintance with the general principles of tactical combination, which moved and formed in various directions without confusion, and without hesitation, that the officers of the artillery, cavalry, and infantry had alike demonstrated their correct conception of the uses of their separate arms, which had moved co-relatively for the support of each other, and that here was not merely the infancy of military knowledge, but its vigorous manhood."

*Osborne, June, 1837.*—*" We saw about 2,000 infantry on parade. They were a fine looking body of men, dressed in white jackets and trousers (summer costume) with the yellow Sikh turban, and wearing black accoutrements. They submit willingly to the same discipline as our troops, but will not wear shakos. They work in three ranks, and do everything by beat of drum, as in the French fashion; are beautifully steady on parade, and deliver both volleys and file firing with greater precision than any troops I ever saw. Their movements on parade are very steady, but very slow. They move only at one pace, the double being unknown to them. Their light infantry work as well as any Company regiment could possibly do."

*Wood, 1838.*—†" There were on parade at Peshawar three brigades of infantry, Court's, Avitabile's, and Misr

* Osborne: Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh, page 102.

† Wood's Journey to the Oxus, page 155.



Sikh Sepoy.

Sukh Raj's . Though I am no soldier, I could not help admiring the material. The men were tall, slim fellows, well set up, and with a fine soldierly bearing. They were neatly dressed in well cut uniforms, and all their accoutrements were clean and in the best order. They marched past, formed into line, and fired volleys with great precision. They next formed to receive cavalry : squares were formed with a gun at each corner, and file firing opened, which was very well sustained."

Yet, though all seemed fair on the surface, the Khalsa troops were seething with discontent, the reason being the eternal arrears of pay, heavy fines, and peculations from the balance. Even though the troops both respected, and feared the Maharajah, there were sporadic outbreaks during his lifetime, and after his death these burst forth in most violent attacks upon those who had robbed and oppressed the soldiers. Here follow extracts, the first from Osborne, to whom Ranjit Singh was very partial and open. He writes :—

*" The Khalsa troops are paid the same as the Company's troops, or rather promised that such will be the case, for they are frequently upwards of a year in arrears, and seldom less than 12 months. At the present moment (June) two out of three regular battalions at Peshawar are in a state of open mutiny for their pay, one being eighteen months, and the other twenty-two months, in arrears! When they are half-starved, and growing desperate, and Ranjit Singh thinks they will bear no more, he makes a compromise with them, and giving them one-half, or one-third of what is due them, half frightens or half cheats them into foregoing further claims.........

" He asked me several questions about our mode of paying, and mentioned his having to disband some hundreds of men for mutiny, I asked him when they had last been paid.

" ' Eighteen months ago,' he said; ' and yet they are discontented !'

" ' Very odd,' I said, sarcastically.

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* Osborne: Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh, page 103.

"He then asked: 'What would you do in such a case?'

"I explained that it would hardly happen in our service, for the men were regularly paid. He replied:

"'So are mine, and more than that; the rascals have been living on plunder for the past six months!'

"I tried hard to impress upon him, but in vain, that I could not very well see how else they could live."

The next is from the Lahore Newsletter, to the Resident at Ludhiana, and dated 23rd August, 1834.*

"............Mian Labh Singh, who had been sent to inspect the troops commanded by Lalji Mal and Birji Mal, who had recently come from Kashmir, and were encamped near one of the gates of the city, attended at the Durbar, and reported that a battalion of Kour Kharak Singh's had come to prefer a complaint, saying that of eight months' pay in arrears, the Kour was only giving them two, and how was it possible for them to subsist on such a sum! The Maharajah ordered Mian Labh Singh and Chet Singh, followers of Kharak Singh, to go and persuade the soldiers to take what the Kour offered to give them, and that afterwards some further money would be remitted them. About half an hour afterwards they returned, and represented that, notwithstanding their efforts, the soldiers still remained obdurate.

"Ranjit Singh desired them to control the soldiers by some stratagem (strategy?). Lal Singh, accordingly ordered Lalji Mal and Birji Mal to continue them. The sepoys, not being provided with swords, or ball cartridges, and having nothing to depend upon but their bayonets, were immediately surrounded by the Jemadars at the head of their troops. Finding themselves opposed, they stood at the charge, on which the Jemadars directed their men to fire. Seven of them were killed, twenty-five wounded, and eight or ten drowned in attempting to escape across the river.

"On hearing the report, the Maharajah expressed great regret at what had happened, and directed the killed

* Punjab Records, Book 140, letter No. 68.

and wounded to be taken to the house of Kour Kharak Singh. An allowance of Rs. 20 was made to pay the cost of each man's funeral, and Rs. 50 to each of the wounded to dress his wounds, and Chet Singh was ordered into confinement under a guard of Dhounkal Singh's battalion. The Maharajah said he was the principal offender in not having exerted himself as he should have done, in diverting the sepoys from their mutinous disposition.

"The Kour (Chet Singh's patron) replied that the outrage had originated in the Maharajah's order to confine the men, and that Mian Labh Singh had only ordered it to be carried into execution. Ranjit Singh gave no reply. Bhai Ram Singh and some other courtiers pleaded for the release of Chet Singh out of consideration for Kour Kharak Singh. The Maharajah said he would release him only on payment of a fine of Rs. 50,000. On the third day, Sardar Mangal Singh applied for the release of the offender. The Maharajah said he must first pay the money, when the Sirdar offered to pay Rs. 25,000, His Highness remained silent. Others preferred the same request, when the Maharajah, sending for the jemadars, reprimanded them severely.

"He inquired by whose orders they had attacked and killed these men. They replied agreeably to the orders of Mian Labh Singh. The Maharajah made no reply. Sardar Basawa Singh represented on the 4th instant, that Kour Kharak Singh was so distressed at Chet Singh's confinement that he had not eaten, and threatened to destroy himself. The Maharajah replied that in consideration of the Kour he would liberate the prisoner on payment of Rs. 50,000. Basawa Singh then interceded for the abatement of the sum, when the Maharajah, in compliance with his application, relinquished Rs. 10,000. The Sardar accordingly delivered Rs. 40,000 to the Maharajah, and Raja Hira Singh was ordered to see the prisoner released."

The Maharajah must have done well out of the transaction, for the person selected as the most guilty was the most wealthy, and, as it is very doubtful that the unfortunate men or their relatives ever got another pie of compensation, he cleared nearly Rs. 40,000.

In conclusion, let us quote the following testimonies to the work of the European instructors. Cunningham, who was present at all the battles of the Punjab Wars, speaks thus* :—

"The guns of the Sikhs were served with rapidity and precision, and the foot soldiers stood between and behind their batteries, firm in their order and active with their musket. The resistance met by the English on this occasion was wholly unexpected, and it was at Ferozeshah for the first time that the Indian and the British soldiers of the English armies met an equal antagonist with their own weapons, even ranks and the fire of artillery."

General Gough writes most appreciatively of the prowess of the Khalsa warriors, but we may take this with a little discount, for most generals are more inclined to over-rate than under-rate the enemy they have beaten† :—

"Never did a native army having so relatively slight an advantage in numbers fight a battle with the British, in which the issue was so doubtful as at Ferozeshah; and if the victory was decisive, opinion remains divided as to what the result might have been if the Sikh troops had found commanders with sufficient capacity to give their qualities full opportunity."

Nor was this stubbornness confined to the battles of the first Sikh War, some of the second being equally doubtful. So far as regards the manœuvres of the Sikhs, Major Howell,‡ writes :—

"An officer who was taken prisoner in the late campaign told me that the march of the Sikh army from the neighbourhood of Chillianwallah was one of the best executed, and most magnificent manœuvres he had ever witnessed. Drawn up in order of battle, facing the British camp, Sher Singh first passed his baggage well to the rear of his reverse flank of the intended march. He then commenced his retreat, preserving his order of battle intact, each battalion keeping perfect place and alignment

* Cunningham's History of the Sikhs (Garrett's Ed.) pages 295 and 298.

† Sikhs and Sikh Wars, page 42.

‡ Volume 14, *Calcutta Gazette*, page 294.

for a distance of twenty miles. So perfectly was the order of battle preserved, that the British captive believed that our army must have been marching close and parallel to that of the Sikhs, instead of being quietly in camp at Chillianwallah."

# CHAPTER IV

## GEORGE THOMAS

*1781—1802*

To whom will not a story of adventure and warfare, though but semi-savage, appeal? Especially when this story is of one who himself raised a small army of alien soldiers, and with their aid achieved a kingdom, even though his rule was not of long duration.

Romance lingers on, even to old age, with many, or may be found abiding in the most unlikely of persons. Not only do such tales appeal to those who travelled and adventured, but also to many who, though they may have longed for the open spaces of the world, and its potential adventures, have been doomed to the well ordered tracks of civilisation. For instance, many years ago, we foregathered with the Semitic manager of a great provision business of London, who in a moment of expansiveness, confessed that his cherished ambition was a life on the blue seas and sun-kissed beaches of the Pacific and his favourite authors, Louis Beck and Stephenson.

This story is of the golden age of the military adventurers in India, and of one who, denied the most elementary of education, born in the lowest ranks of society, and thrust into the world when a boy, yet, was the prototype of 'him who would be a king' and, luckier than Kipling's fictional hero, actually achieved his ambition. We shall show you the extraordinary spectacle of two deserters from the military forces of hostile nations, contending for mastery, one commander of an army of 50,000, ruler of a vast district for Scindia, and Dictator of northern Hindustan; the other master of a Free Company of 12,000 men, and ruler of a considerable district conquered by, and administered for himself.

Not of him who conquered, do we write, but of him who succumbed, leaving behind him the story of an astonishing career to afford a theme for many word weavers, Let us show you how Thomas appeared to his contemporaries. The first being Tod, the annalist of Rajasthan, who thus wrote :—

*" In Thomas was seen a union of wild energy, great foresight, and daring intrepidity, which combined with a gigantic form and strength, placed him the most conspicuous of all who carved their way to fortune in a vast and wide field. Nor is there any reason to doubt that, but for the unavoidable close of his career in the unequal contest with Scindia's great forces under Perron, he would have made Lahore his capital, for he despised the Sikhs as soldiers, and averred that he could always put 5,000 Sikh horsemen to flight with 500 Rohilla horse."

Now follows James Skinner, who knew Thomas even better, for he not only fought against him, but guarded him after his surrender to Perron :—

†" Intimately acquainted with the natives of India, Thomas was eminently qualified to guide and command them. His military talents may be estimated from the history of his actions, and his remarkable ability from his energy in providing resources in the time of need. His manners were grave and gentle, and he was courteous to all. He was frank, generous and humane, though subject to sudden ebullitions of temper, in which he committed acts of which he quickly repented, and as soon atoned for. His conduct to the families of all who fell or were disabled in his service, was a convincing proof of his generosity, and the devoted attachment of his personal followers is the best evidence of their appreciation of his character."

His faculty of easy forgiveness is shown by continual adherence to the fortunes of employers who attempted to take his life, by his rescue of Begum Sumru in her dire need, though she had frequently invaded his district, and by that of the sister of the Raja of Patiala who had bravely

* European Adventurers, page 217.

† Life of James Skinner, Volume I, page 259.

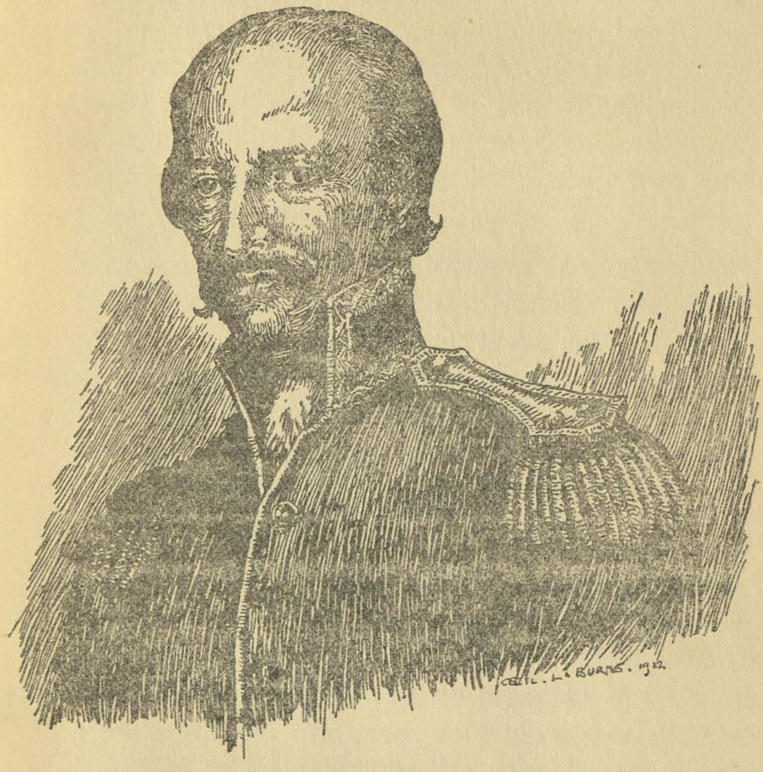
defended the territory from which her brother had fled. On his return this recreant had repudiated the terms and attempted to revenge himself on his sister, whereupon she, sending a messenger after Thomas, induced him to return and rescue her, even though he acknowledges that she was a bitter enemy, yet " a better man than her brother."

His disregard of the rights of property cannot be condoned, and there is no doubt that he was often but a common robber. Yet, in extenuation, we should remember that at this period Hindustan was in the melting pot, and seething with dissension. Might was right, and possession regulated by—

" The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who had the power,
And they should keep who can."

George Thomas was born in Tipperary about the year 1758, probably to a father who, Keene asserts, was descended from Cromwell's military settlers. This may be correct, as we find from Peacock's list of ships and soldiers sent to Ireland in 1642 (in which by the way Cromwell figures as a Lieut. of foot), that a certain John Thomas commanded a small supply ketch. Such an ancestry may have been the reason that Thomas adopted that sea-faring life from which he was impressed into the Royal Navy.

He arrived off the coast of India in the year 1780, as a gunner in the fleet commanded by Admiral Hughes, and with this served in several actions against the French fleet, aboard one of the vessels of which was his future enemy and conqueror, Pierre Cuillier (Perron), then a Sergeant of Marines. Also, another coincidence, the two men deserted in the same year. Thomas left at the end of 1781, and making his way inland found employment as a gunner with the various Poligars, or chiefs of the tribes of mountain robbers who at the period infested Southern India, varying their usual avocation by occasionally acting as partisan soldiers for the French, or English, as inclination impelled, or inducement offered.



George Thomas.

Most of them possessed a number of small cannon manned by European deserters, or the other vagabonds then so numerous in Southern India, and, indeed scattered all over India. So numerous were these, that at one time Yusuf Khan, a partisan of the British, and later, with reason, their bitter enemy, had no less than 120 of them commanded by a Frenchman named Marchand. When Yusuf Khan was taken and hanged, the great proportion of deserters amongst these men escaped his fate by an accidental omission in the terms offered to the Frenchman to betray his employer, much to the annoyance of the English commander-in-chief. Eyre Coote also employed a battery of four guns, manned by similar men under an adventurer named Bristol.

Thomas endured this employment for about five years, when he entered the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad as a private gunner. In this capacity he served for only six months, when he quitted it and took a six months' tramp to Delhi, where he secured employment with Begum Sumru. The Begum's heterogeneous army was manned and commanded by numerous Europeans, most of whom were even choicer rascals than those of other armies.

Thomas, a handsome man of good manners, soon found favour with the Begum, and was advanced by her to the command of her personal guard. It is said that he became her lover, which is quite possible, for the Begum had a keen eye for a fine man, and having commenced life as a slave girl, a situation in life not easily compatible with stern morals, was not likely to let him pass, though quite averse to any fixed connection. It is said that Thomas hoped to marry her, but even then, she had so many lovers that had she married one, the consequences might have been as serious as they were later, when she did select one for that "honour."

Her troops being feudatory to the King of Delhi, were called upon to assist in reducing a rebellious town, which they soon invested. The time was the Ramzan, a

period when most Mahomedans abstain from food and drink during the day, though making ample amends after sundown. Not doubting that the enemy would follow their own example, the Imperial troops gave themselves up to a regular debauch after nightfall. However, they had miscalculated, for their co-religionists did not do so, but instead, sallied forth and fell upon the camp at midnight.

They penetrated deeply into the camp, and would have taken the Emperor prisoner but for the fact that Thomas, who alone had kept his men in control, was ready when called for, and, aided by the Begum, drove off the enemy and saved the Emperor. The abstinence of the troops and the vigilance of their commander were rewarded with presents, and the Begum was allotted a jaghir on the frontiers.

This fief was held conditional on keeping the frontier free from Sikh raids, and this duty, together with the jaghir for the maintenance of himself and the troops, the Begum made over to Thomas. In addition to his military capacity, another reason may have been that she must have tired of him, to judge by the fact that she gave him a Christian wife named Marie, from amongst her handmaidens.

One would surmise that of all men to manage a civil government, however petty, this uneducated sailor would have been the least suitable. But, as so often happens, opportunity makes the man, and Thomas, like others in similar cases, rose to the occasion. He displayed administrative powers of a high order, and by a judicious combination of force and conciliation, brought his turbulent and almost depopulated district to repopulation and prosperity. Not only did he repel the Sikhs, but knowing that against such raiders attack was the best defence, pursued them into their own country, where he plundered indiscriminately, as they had done, and levied a heavy toll before withdrawal.

Eventually, peace and industry resulted in a flow of revenue to the state coffers, and the cultivation of long waste lands. Naturally, this success and growing power aroused the jealousy of the French officers, and they carefully insinuated into the Begum's suspicious mind the idea that Thomas was only awaiting an opportunity to dethrone her. This suspicion was so carefully fomented that it overcame all other feelings, so she seized as hostages, the wife and child of Thomas, whilst he was absent in pursuit of the Sikhs.

On hearing what had occurred, he returned swiftly, and rescuing his family from the Begum's guard by force, retired to Tappal, where he proclaimed himself independent. His reign was very brief for the Begum's whole army soon captured him, and dispersing his troops thrust him over the border into British territory, possessed of only Rs. 500, discounted by a wife and child. However, nothing daunted, Thomas expended this capital in the purchase of arms, with which he equipped a number of needy and desperate rescals, and utilising these as a robber band, soon obtained enough funds to arm and equip a total of 250 men. In addition, he cast four six-pounder guns, from brass utensils commandeered from the villages.

General Gilbert, of Sobraon fame, cited as a proof of Thomas's ingenuity that he strengthened these guns with small steel bars increasing their life and lightening the weight. Having sufficiently trained his rascals, Thomas hired them out to Appa Khandi Rao, a feudatory of Scindia's, but then in rebellion against him. The force not being strong enough, Appa Khandi assigned Thomas a jaghir* for the maintenance of a force to be increased to 500 men. There was method in this, for he himself had never been able to extract a single pice of revenue from the district.

Never doubting his own ability to squeeze a maintenance from it, Thomas cheerfully set out for his realm,

* Jaghir: the proceeds of the revenue of a district usually assigned on military tenure.

breaking the monotony of the march, and saving expenditure by plundering the villages through which they passed. These belonged to the Begum, and Thomas justified what he did, as merely reprisals. Arrived at his destination, the inhabitants gave him a taste of their quality by stealing his own horses the night he crossed the border. Such an outrage was intolerable, so, justly indignant at these dogs robbing a wolf, he set out to show them that he could bite harder, and after hard fighting, brought them into subjection. Then, elated with this success, he added the best of them to his own force, and having trained them, decided to invade the neighbouring territory and add it to his own.

However, he had miscalculated, and was forced to retreat with the enemy hard upon his heels. Eventually, after considerable mangling, he managed to shake them off, and reached home to find an S. O. S. from Appa awaiting him. That chief and his troops having fallen out over the eternal question of arrears of pay, the latter had surrounded the fort in which he had taken shelter, and promised to roast their arrears out of him when they got him. By forty mile marches Thomas arrived in time to make terms, inducing them to accept a bit on account, and return to their allegiance.

This service was rewarded by a jaghir of three more un-remunerative districts, and Rs. 3,000 in cash. One of these, Jhajjhar became his headquarters, and having established himself, he made it his base for the numerous expeditions he conducted, either for hire, or for his own hand. These being far too numerous to detail here we will mention only the more important, especially that which gained him the title of Jowruj jung (George the Victorious), though he was usually called either the Jehazi Sahib, or Sahib Bahadur.

On this occasion he had accepted a commission from Scindia to assist in the subjection of the rebel town of Sohawal Garh, being associated with two of Scindia's own

Brigades, one under Allan Gardner and the other commanded by Colonel Sutherland, both *ex*-British officers. Having invested, and surveyed the place, a council of war decided that it was too strong for immediate assault and required a regular siege. Thomas dissented, but being over-ruled left the council and resolved to go his own way. Having personally reconnoitred he decided that the place could be taken by a sudden attack, and that his own force alone could do it.

At dawn next morning he attacked, and was in possession of both town and citadel before his allies realised what was happening. When they came up and demanded a share of the plunder Thomas flatly refused, giving them clearly to understand that what he alone had taken, he could alone hold. Naturally this broke up the confederacy which troubled Thomas little for he had paid himself, and home he marched flushed with victory, and plunder, just in time to scare off the force the Begum had despatched to capture his dominion during his absence.

Having recuperated, and reinforced, he accompanied Appa in a number of expeditions, either legitimate quarrels, or perhaps for plunder and revenge only, for as we have remarked Hindustan was seething with ferment and quarrel, each chief being ever ready for a fight. Naturally any excuse served.

One of these led to a quarrel, for Thomas having taken a deadly enemy of Appa's under promise of quarter offended his employer by refusing to give his captive up for execution, excusing the refusal by his pledged word; and when Appa to whom such a plea appeared only an evasion sent troops to take the man by force, Thomas drove them off. Much annoyed, or as he thought, humiliated by the incident Appa determined to get rid of his uncomplaint ally, and with this view, arranged with some 500 Ghosains (nomadic robbers), to ambuscade Thomas, whom he arranged to send out on a fictitious expedition.

Luckily for Thomas, some of his friends gave him warning, so, affecting to accept Appa's orders without suspicion, he set out. As soon as he was clear of the camp, he doubled his marches, and falling upon the Ghosains the night before they expected him, cut up most of them. Two of the wounded he sent back to Appa, with the news of what he had done, and that he was fully aware of his employer's treachery, and then marched off towards home. He had not got far before he was overtaken by a despairing message from Appa, whom his enemies had surrounded, as soon as they had heard that he and Thomas had parted.

As the messenger brought an emphatic denial of treachery, and what was better, a substantial sum of money to clinch it, Thomas returned to his relief, and drove off the enemy. From this he returned to his own border, for the Sikhs, emboldened by his absence; had raided extensively. Not only did he drive them off, but he followed them up into Patiala from which he extracted a substantial indemnity before returning home.

The next appeal for help came from the Begum, who, having forgotten her policy of keeping her lovers at arm's length, had married one. This man. being of a better class than the others, and not slow to let them see it, was cordially detested, and, as soon as the marriage was known, they, with their soldiers. mutinied and set up a son of Reinhardt's by his first wife. The Begum and her husband, a Frenchman named Le Vacieu, fled towards British territory, but being overtaken. the man committed suicide. The Begum also attempted it, but failed, either through lack of inclination, or strength.

She was taken back to Sardhana, and there chained between two guns, occasionally being placed astride of one at mid-day, when it was nearly red hot, a form of torture often practised by such troops. Fortunately, one of her officers sent an appeal to Thomas, who, forgetting injuries and mindful only of benefits, hastened by forced marches

to the rescue. He succeeded by a combination of bluff and bribery in causing the troops to re-instal her, giving them a lakh of rupees in payment of arrears, this latter being a potent cause of the mutiny.

Yet even this service was forgotten by the ungrateful woman, for she not only attempted to raid Thomas' territory several times, but joined Bourquin in the final attack upon Thomas, which caused his downfall. After this very creditable episode, Thomas again joined Appa Khandi in various expeditions, one of which brought about a disagreement and a renewed attempt at assassination. During a raid on Jaipur, they had taken a number of bullock drawn guns, which as Thomas's own men had captured singly, he refused to share with his employer, and when Appa attempted to seize them by force, drove off the attackers.

Much enraged at this second defiance, Appa decided upon another attempt at assassination, and with this in view, engaged, as a personal guard, some 200 Rohillas, men whose profession was war and slaughter, varied by treachery. Having instructed them as to what was required, he invited Thomas to a conference within the house he occupied as headquarters. Quite unsuspicious, Thomas left the guard who always accompanied him outside the house, but as soon as he entered the room, he saw that something was wrong, for the Rohillas, deeming their prey safe, made no attempt to hide their feelings.

Accordingly, affecting to notice nothing, he kept very close to Appa, and when the Chief rose to leave the room, pushed one pistol into his back, and with the other, kept off the would-be assailants. Meanwhile, his men, alarmed at his long absence, and seeing other Rohillas about, swarmed into the passage, and when Thomas compelled Appa to open the door, were ready and eager for an attack upon his assailants. Even this treachery was forgiven, and Thomas remained with Appa until that chief, who was suffering from an incurable disease, drowned himself in the sacred Nerbudda River.

Then came trouble for Vaman Rao, the heir, repudiated all the jaghirs made over to Thomas, and when the latter refused to surrender them, brought in the Sikhs on the one side, and the Begum on the other, and dispossessed Thomas of all but his town of Jhajjar. Deprived of most of his resources, Thomas now became frankly a robber chief, hiring out his men for any enterprising promising plunder, and justifying such proceedings by remarking, perhaps truly, that if he did not rob others, they would him. It was merely wolf eating wolf, and the strongest must survive.

After rehabilitating himself, he cast an acquisitive eye upon the district of Hariana, once a fertile country, but now ruined and desolate through the continual harrying by robbers and neighbours. Into this derelict district Thomas marched with 3,000 men, and after much fighting cleared it of the intruders, adding as usual the best of them to his own forces, for in those days the vanquished usually joined the victor.

Having secured peace, he settled down in the almost deserted town of Hansi, fortified it, and by tactful and generous treatment of the surviving inhabitants, induced those who had fled to return to the town and district and resume their ordinary avocations. He drew up a code for civil administration, and law, apportioning the revenue into moieties for civil and military, allotting the latter for salaries, administration expenses, and pay and pension for the troops. He built court-houses, established arsenals and munition factories, in which were manufactured arms, equipment, ammunition, powder, and even cannon, and actually struck rupees, a sample of which we give*.

Certainly, his rule was a military autocracy, but even so it was benevolently administered, and shows that the unique knowledge of Asiatic men, and mentality, which Skinner attributed to Thomas, was justified. Presently, the whirligig of necessity caused Vaman Rao

* On the cover of this volume.

to seek aid from Thomas, which, in the easy manner of the times, and of free-lances when inducement offered, was accorded. The case was that Vaman Rao had fallen out with the Raja of Jaipur, and not being strong enough to tackle the campaign himself, be thought himself of Thomas, whom he knew to be a good soldier, and just now well equipped.

He sent a substantial sum in coin, together with a glowing account of the plunder obtainable from Jaipur. Naturally these arguments prevailed, and Thomas joined him with 4,000 men, to which Vaman Rao added his own 4,000. Together, they cheerfully set out to invade Jaipur, which could put 30,000 men into the field. However, the disparity was more apparent than real, for the invaders were well armed and disciplined, whereas the Jaipuris were the usual disorderly mobs of horsemen which then constituted the forces of the unreformed Indian armies.

The country through which they advanced was open and sandy. Being continually harried by the Jaipur horsemen, Thomas, when in the presence of the enemy, moved forward in a hollow square, his cavalry numbering about 200, contained in the centre. Whenever attacked, the square halted, and after repelling the enemy by musket fire, the Rohillas issued forth and completed the rout. Every night when he halted the brigade was surrounded by a zeriba of the thorny bushes which were the only vegetation of the desert. It is striking to notice the resemblance of these tactics to those of the British in the Sudan campaigns of nearly ninety years later.

For a time matters marched most satisfactorily, the invaders taking toll of every town they passed. But as they got farther from home, and lost more men, things became serious, for they were isolated far in a hostile country. It was therefore decided to make the best of what they had secured and get away before matters became more desperate.

Suffering the greatest hardship from thirst and the fatigue of ploughing through the deep sand, whilst eternally harassed by the enemy horsemen, the decimated brigades fell back until they reached the town of Fatehpur where they were to find wells. Their hopes of speedy relief from the horrors of thirst were dashed, for on arrival, they found that the townsmen had filled in the wells and withdrawn within their walls.

Thomas turned at bay, and deputing half his force to clear out the wells, kept off the enemy. Then as his men were too wearied to go further at present, he made a zeriba of Babul bushes within which he endured a siege until they were fully restored. Then sallying forth, he cut his way through the investing forces, and though followed up closely by them, safely regained his own frontier. Here he awaited re-inforcements, and ammunition, after receipt of which he once more advanced into Jaipur. But the Raja had had enough of him, and deeming it cheaper to buy him off than to fight him, put up a ransom of Rs. 30,000 with which Thomas was content.

Loth to waste his newly conditioned troops, he raided Bikanir, from which the Raja bought him off with Rs. 20,000, half in cash and the balance in promissory notes on Delhi which, however, were dishonoured—a piece of trickery for which Thomas ultimately exacted full payment, and interest. The next excursions into Jind and Patiala were quite remunerative expeditions. That to Patiala brought out an instance of the chivalry inherent in Thomas for, after the Raja had fled the enemy were resisted by his more manly sister. She after a stout resistance made terms with Thomas of which her brother disapproved on his return, and actively shewed it by shutting her up in a fort of her own.

An appeal to Thomas brought him back to her release after which he made peace with the brother and then returned on his homeward journey. There was no question of the softer feelings being concerned, for he remarked

that she was a very masculine and ugly individual, but withal a "*better man than her brother*". He next accepted a commission from Ambaji Ingria to assist Colonel Sutherland in an attack on Udaipur, the terms being Rs. 50,000 down and a share of the plunder. But for some unexplained reason, probably a remembrance of their former association, which he still resented, Sutherland quitted Thomas half way leaving him to carry out the expedition unaided.

Notwithstanding this defection Thomas was so successful that the Udaipuris tried to buy him off—an offer he refused, for he had the true Free Lance virtue of fidelity to his present employer, even though he would cheerfully fight him later. Yet his fidelity to Ambaji was rewarded by treachery on the part of that peculiar person, who became so envious of his employee's success that he incited Scindia's General, Perron, to invade Jhajjhar in Thomas' absence. Though this fell through, Ambaji was not discouraged for he arranged an ambuscade both to relieve himself of Thomas, and secure the whole of the plunder—a nice little scheme which also failed, as Thomas, warned of what was intended, diverged from his intended route into Bikanir.

Here he took the opportunity of settling that little matter of the dishonoured bills, and this settled went off home for a rest. It was not a long one for he soon accepted a proposal backed up by Rs. 40,000, from the Bikaniri rebels to take a fort which was threatening their advance on the capital. Having executed this commission, he joined them and on arrival at Bikanir, exerted his force to procure an amicable settlement, for which he was rewarded by both parties.

The next contract was from Scindia, to clear the Saharanpur district of the Sikhs who had overrun it. This accomplished, he again returned home; on the way stopping to subdue two of his own towns, which having waxed fat, were now kicking. The rebellion was soon

quelled, though contrary to the usual custom he did not decimate the rebels except in purse, so now having plenty of funds and nothing else on hand, he set out to prepare for his long cherished invasion of the Punjab. Six months later he advanced and, having reduced the Cis-Sutlej States to agreement, and ransom, though he only had 5,000 men and a few cannon, advanced on Lahore.

But for the news arriving that Perron was contemplating an attack on Jhajjhar, he might have carried out his long cherished idea of hoisting the British flag on Lahore fort, for above all Thomas was an ardent Imperialist, and had he not been deterred, the British flag would have shadowed Lahore nearly fifty years before it actually did so.

Here let us mention that before invading the Punjab, Thomas had approached Lord Wellesley through a Captain White of the British Service for aid, or at least tacit acquiescence in his project of conquering the Punjab, mentioning* "that I have no other design in view than the glory of my King and country, and do not wish to see my conquests fall to those at enmity with them (the French)." However, Lord Wellesley definitely refused to do either.

Thomas had now reached his zenith. and had his diplomacy and prudence been at all comparable with his military genius, might now have commenced to make history, instead of merely incidents in it. Lacking these indispensible qualities, and probably intoxicated with continual success, he lost all sense of proportion, and fell almost like the stick of a rocket. It is now necessary to explain the relative positions of himself and his great rival, Perron, the Frenchman, now General-in-Chief of Scindia's armies, Governor of Hindustan, and its virtual dictator.

The important positions held by Frenchmen in the armies of the Native powers had not escaped Napoleon,

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* Life of James Skinner, Volume I, page 238.

and in order to secure their aid for his cherished scheme of invading and conquering India, he sent out emissaries to interview them. Perron, who was just as ardent a French imperialist as Thomas was an English one, was promised high rank and honours for his active support. This he enthusiastically promised to give, and added that of his troops, even though they were Scindia's, for he was confident that he could lead them where he wished.

* To further the scheme, 1,500 Frenchmen, including officers of all arms and a number of gunners, were landed at Pondicherry, from whence they should quietly be filtered into the armies where French officers had influence. However, the scheme fell through, for though the men were duly landed, Pondicherry was so carefully guarded, that none got through, and eventually all returned to France.

The main obstacle to Perron's designs in northern India was Thomas, who not only had a large force of his own, but was very popular with the British born officers serving under Perron, who resented the favouritism shown to the Frenchmen, and the fact that to them were given all the posts of honour, whilst the Englishmen got only the dangerous ones.

Whilst Thomas was absent in the Punjab, Perron decided that the time had come for one or the other to be paramount, and with this view he summoned Thomas to an interview to try and arrange terms, before resorting to combat. Thomas accepted the invitation, and the two met at Bahadurgarh, near Delhi, on 10th October, 1801. They met with a certain amount of personal enmity, undisguised on the part of Thomas, but dissembled on that of Perron, who really desired to enlist Thomas into Scindia's service, for then he could be sent to the Deccan instead of Perron himself, whom Scindia had frequently summoned.

These summonses Perron had evaded, for he did not wish to split up his army, or be absent from Northern

* European Adventurers, page 95.

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* **European Adventurers, page 95.**

Hindustan in case Napoleon's schemes materialised. He offered Thomas liberal terms,* these being that he should surrender all his jaghirs and territorial acquisitions, and join Scindia's army with the whole of his brigade, for which he would receive the rank and pay of a colonel, and a monthly subsidy of Rs. 80,000 for his brigades. Had Thomas reflected or been a wily man, he might have accepted the terms, for the possibilities were immense. There might have been no Mahratta wars, for quite possibly the British element amongst the officers might have superseded Perron in favour of himself, and this done he might have been permitted to carry out his scheme of adding the Punjab to the British dominions.

However, his fanatical hatred of Frenchmen, and sense of his own importance blinded him to the actual facts, and he broke off negotiations. His excuse was "Mr. Perron and myself, being subjects of nations in a state of hostility, could not possibly act together in concert, and I was convinced that he being a Frenchman, and I an Englishman, Mr. Perron would always be prepared to misinterpret my actions."

If, as may have been possible, Thomas cherished thoughts of an independent kingdom in perpetuity, a little reflection might have shown him that such an institution would never have been tolerated by either British, or Indian Governments, being offensive to the one, and dangerous to the other.

Whatever the reason, Thomas abruptly broke up the conference, and to use his own expression "marched away in disgust." There was thus no alternative but to either wipe him out, or tolerate an ever present danger in his rear, so, Perron, who was imperatively summoned to the Deccan, where Scindia was in dire straits, left a division under Major Bourquin, his second in command, to deal with Thomas, whilst he marched southwards, to rescue his employer and win a great battle for him.

* Life of James Skinner, Volume I, page 216.

Bourquin's division consisted of 12,000 men of all arms, the principal officers of which were himself, Oliver, and Rabells, Frenchmen; the Smith brothers, Europeans; and James Skinner, Robert Skinner, Maculloch, and Mackenzie, Eurasians. Considering even this preponderant strength, not sufficient to deal effectively with Thomas, he called in the Sikhs, and the Begum's Brigades, though the lattre did not join him till later. The total strength opposed to Thomas was therefore about 20,000 of all arms.

His own forces consisted of about 10,000 men of whom 500 were horsemen, his European officers being himself, Hopkins, and two Eurasians, Birch and Hearsey, together with four sergeants of unknown nationality, probably either Eurasians, or British deserters. As, at the moment of rupture the enemy was actually nearer his main base at Hansi than himself, his first business was to draw them off, and this he did by marching off north, ostensibly to deal with the Sikhs first, and then the others in detail. After him went Bourquin with the main body, though perhaps not wholly deceived, for he left 3,000 men under Ferdinand Smith to take Georgegarh, a strong and newly built fort, some sixty miles north of Hansi.

Having drawn Bourquin well away, Thomas doubled back by another route, and dropping on the unsuspecting Smith, drove him off from Georgegarh with a loss of 700 men, and all his ammunition and stores. The pursuit was stayed by the timely arrival of some of Bourquin's horsemen, who had detected the ruse, though rather late, and the arrival of the whole of Bourquin's army next day caused Thomas to withdraw to his prepared position, a strategic one, flanked by Georgegarh on the right, some high hills of loose sand on the left, and faced by a strip of loose and deep sand.

Infuriated at being both duped, and defeated, Bourquin, even though the day was far advanced when he arrived, and his men fatigued with a thirty mile march.

attacked at once. His gun teams and ammunition immediately becoming deeply involved in the sand, Thomas, seizing the opportunity, opened such a vigorous and effective fire from his own guns that in a short time twenty-five tumbrils blew up, and all the gun cattle were killed. Yet Bourquin's infantry pressed on, and were only repelled late in the evening, suffering, it is said, 4,000 casualties. Incidentally, these losses seem very heavy and are probably over-estimated, though it should be remembered that the battles fought between solely Indian forces were always very bloody, no quarter being given.

Of his European officers, Bourquin lost Ferdinand Smith and Maculloch, killed, and Oliver and Rabells, wounded, whilst Thomas lost his second in command, Hopkins, with 1,200 men, the former having both legs carried off by a cannon ball. Far more irreparable than the loss of the soldiers was that of Hopkins, to which indeed Lewis Smith attributes the beginning of the end, for he writes :—

*" Hopkins was worth more than a couple of battalions to Thomas, and had he possessed such another, the indecisive battle of Georgegarh would have been turned into complete victory. Not only was he the best officer Thomas possessed, but his best friend and only confidant, and to this loss must be attributed the mental collapse which Thomas now suffered."

James Skinner thus corroborates this opinion, though giving a slightly different, or more probable, reason for the failure of Thomas to follow up his advantage† :—

" Oppressed by the loss of his only friend and confidant, and worn out by the strain of so many years' constant fighting, together with the present anxiety, Thomas abandoned himself to one of those prolonged debauches, to which he was, unfortunately, so much addicted. Yet before doing so he had a letter of condolence with a sum of Rs. 2,000 sent to the sister of Hopkins in Calcutta, for her present needs, and a promise of more, for her brother had been her only support."

* European Adventurers in India, page 192.
† Life of James Skinner, Volume I, page 224.

Then, entering his tent, he was lost to the outside world for many days, during which fatal absence the enemy recovered confidence, and received reinforcements. Of what might have been had he not given away to his propensity to drink, Lewis Smith writes* :—

"Had Thomas taken advantage of Bourquin's ignorance and folly, and sallied forth upon his beaten troops, he would have, in demolishing them, overturned Perron's power; had he acted with anything like his usual boldness and activity, the force under Bourquin must have been utterly destroyed. The friends of Thomas in Perron's army would have thrown off the mask and openly taken his part, and before another such efficient force could have been collected, Thomas would have been master of Delhi and the King's person, and thus extinguished Perron's power and authority. Scindia would have quietly acquiesced in the transfer of power to Thomas, for he was indifferent who governed Hindustan for him, and must have bowed to the will of an aspiring mind, governing large bodies of trained infantry."

However, when Thomas, his body now as shattered as his mind had previously been, came forth from his tent, the game was practically lost. Both Birch and Hearsey were men of no account, and, missing the master mind, had let things drift, whilst the enemy was reorganising and recovering morale and strength. Smith remarks that had either had any capacity for leadership, the slightest show of an offensive would have caused a panic and the demoralised flight of Bourquin's army even though Thomas was incapacitated.

The beleaguering force now numbered upwards of 30,000 to oppose whom Thomas had but about 2,000 he could really depend upon, these being his Rohilla horse, and the remnants of the battalions of Hopkins, all old and faithful soldiers. The others were comparatively late recruits from districts now held by the enemy, and their families being hostages, were exceedingly lukewarm in what they considered was a lost cause. Such men were

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* European Adventurers, page 194.

easy material for Bourquin's emissaries to work upon, and consequently desertions became frequent, whilst those who held on, only did so to embarrass their employer. Day after day mysterious fires broke out in forage stacks and provision dumps, so realising what was about to happen if he stayed there, Thomas decided to break through and make for his last hope at Hansi.

Before departing he called together all his men, and explaining that he could no longer help them, distributed his ready cash amongst them, and advised them to accept the terms Bourquin had offered to all wishing to join Scindia. It is said that many of his old soldiers wept a farewell, and a number renounced all worldly interests to devote themselves to a holy life, vowing that they who had served "George Bahadur" could never obey another commander.

All being ready on the night of the 10th of November 1801, Thomas with the Rohilla Horse, Birch, Hearsey, and the two surviving European sergeants cut their way out, and within twenty-four hours had ridden the sixty miles to Hansi. Hotly pursued the whole distance, the Rohillas were cut down, or fell out by the way, so that only the Europeans reached Hansi. The whole sixty miles were accomplished by Thomas on one horse, a Persian barb which, it is pleasant to note, lived for many years after, an honoured pensioner of the British Resident at Anupshahr to whom Thomas presented it after his deportation to British territory.*

Within a week he was beleaguered and a day or so later a bombardment was set up. For some days this was continued, but as the enemy had only solid shot of small calibre which embedded themselves in the dried mud walls, Bourquin decided to attempt a storm. Accordingly on the 21st November 1801 at dawn, three strong columns converged on the walls of Hansi. Though vigorously pressed, the attacks failed, one European officer, a Major Bernier,

* Life in Mission, Camp and Zenana, page 96.

being killed, and many other casualties occurring, for Thomas, though now too late, had regained his wonted vigour and was ubiquitous.

Almost daily assaults continued, the most vigorous being that of the 3rd of December, on which the assaulting column effected a temporary lodgement, and were only driven off by Thomas himself. One column was led by Robert Skinner with whom Thomas had a hand to hand combat until the two were parted by a rush of Skinner's own soldiers. He then retreated to the citadel and what occurred there is best told by James Skinner * :—

" My column was opposed by Birch, who twice beat me back by showering burning straw, powder pots, and anything else he could get hold of upon us. Finally, I reached the top of the wall, and as I did so, I saw him aiming a double barrelled gun at me. Thinking this a very scurvy reception from an old school mate, I aimed my half pike at him, which took off his hat and caused him to miss me. Birch then ran off after his men, who were already retreating, and we pursued them to the very gates of the citadel. Just as we reached them the gates opened, and out rushed a European with his sleeves tucked up over his tattooed arms, a shield on one, and a great sword in his other hand. He looked so ferocious that I eyed him for a moment, and then turned and ran, and my men after me. I can face most men, but that one looked so ferocious that he frightened me."

A man who can thus frankly avow his fright could certainly be no coward.

However, all this belated bravery was of no avail, for as the days went on and provisions became scarce, and hope of relief lost, the fainthearts listened to the emissaries of Bourquin, who had managed to effect a communication. Finally the principal native officers arranged to surrender the chief for immunity, service with Scindia and a substantial reward. Elated with the near promise of his enemy being given into his hands, Bourquin made no

* Life of James Skinner, Volume I, page 225.

secret of the humiliations he would subject him to when in his power.

But he reckoned without the British born officers, who, by means of protests, and hardly veiled threats, managed to secure honourable terms for their compatriot. These were that he was to be accorded the honours of war, to be permitted to retain his personal effects and fortune, and to be deported to British territory with an escort suitable to his rank. The men were to be permitted to depart except such as desired to accept service under Scindia, a condition to which most, including Birch and Hearsey, agreed, though some, as at Georgegarh, refused to serve another after " Sahib Bahadur."

On the 1st of January 1802 the decimated force marched out with the honours of war, Thomas becoming the guest of his conqueror until arrangements could be made with the British for his reception. It was not long before more trouble arose between Bourquin and Thomas the occasion being that of a banquet given by the British born officers to their compatriot. Matters proceeded amicably enough until the toast giving. That of Thomas having been enthusiastically received, Bourquin arose, and as a counterblast gave, " General Perron and further success to his arms."

With one accord the British born officers turned their glasses down at this insult to a fallen foe, except Thomas, whe flashing out his sword ran at Bourquin, and endeavoured to cut him down. Some of the officers seized Thomas whilst others pushed Bourquin from the tent, and also cleared it of the guard, who hearing the uproar had rushed in. For some time Thomas raved in drunken defiance until presently he was pacified. Others induced Bourquin to forgive the attempted assault, so finally the night was ended with the two professing maudlin friendship for eternity.

After some time, James Skinner persuaded Thomas to retire, promising to see him safe home. It was as well

that he did so, for when they arrived at the tent, the sentry whose challenge was answered by Thomas with "Sahib Bahadur," answering that he knew no "Sahib Bahadur" but Bourquin; was slashed at by Thomas, to avenge what he considered another insult, and had his right hand cut off. Only Skinner's personal efforts saved Thomas from the vengeance of the man's comrades, until after further difficulty he was induced to go to bed.

The next morning, as usual after a heavy bout, he had forgotten all that had passed. On being told, he expressed the utmost regret at his conduct, sent an apology to Bourquin, and a solatium of Rs. 500 to the disabled sentry. However, though Bourquin accepted the apology, he decided to get rid of his troublesome guest as quickly as possible, and the next morning, under an escort of a whole battalion, commanded by Lewis Smith, he was sent off to Anupshahr.

Here he remained as the guest of the British Resident until his affairs were settled, and his fortune realised. Of this, which amounted to about three and a half lakhs, he settled $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs upon his wife who, as usual with the country born wives of the adventurers, refused to leave India. All arrangements having been completed, he was sent down the river to Calcutta, the intention being to proceed from thence to Ireland, under charge of Captain Francklin, to whom, whilst on route he related the story of his life, for which we are mostly indebted for our sketch, though a good deal has been gleaned from other sources, both in addition and corroboration.

At Benares he met Lord Wellesley, who was greatly interested in Thomas and his adventures, especially his idea of bringing the Punjab under British rule. It is recorded that whilst they were looking over a map of India, Thomas, who though a fair Persian scholar, was quite illiterate in English, inquired what the red shading meant. On being told he sorrowfully placed his hand

over the whole of the Punjab, and said, "Had I been left alone, I would have made all this red with this hand*."

He next passed on to Bahrampur, where he was taken ill with fever, and, worn out as he was, by the constant warfare and hardships of nearly twenty years, he succumbed on the 22nd of August, 1802, at the age of 46. Perhaps it was much better that he died where he did, for had he lived to return to England, he could never have settled down peacefully in a small Irish town, and would have been a nuisance to his neighbours, and a burden and disgrace to himself.

No stone marks the spot where, in a graveyard almost as forgotten as himself, rests this wild and wandering genius, whose faults, though many, were amply condoned by his military qualities, his chivalry to friend and foe alike, and a strict adherence to his plighted word, worthy of a more exalted station in life.

* Life of George Thomas, page 212.

# CHAPTER V

MATTHEW HEANEY OR WILLIAM O'BRIEN—JAMES SAHIB, FERINGHI — MACDONALD — JONES — PRICE — GORDON OR CARRON — THOMAS FUKINAUL — JAN SAHIB — WILLIAM LEIGH, *alias* MAHOMED KHAN — BELL AND BROWNE.

Far away in the remote Kangra Valley, pleasantly situated on the brow of a low cliff, overhanging the turbulent Beas river, lie some lowly and fast crumbling tombs, within which rest European adventurers, who in the early 19th century served Sansar Chand, the once powerful ruler of the Kangra Valley.

A short space behind is a rude stone platform, bearing two grotesquely sculptured miniature stone horses, commemorative, it is said, of those once belonging to William O'Brien, the principal of those who ended their stormy lives in this alien, though peaceful and pleasant spot. It is said that he was held in such estimation by his employers that when he died, his horses were slain to follow him to such bourne as he might attain, following the old custom of the Huns. Whom the other graves contain, we have not been able to ascertain with any certainty, and only a fair amount of conjecture, which, however, we believe to be correct.

Our first acquaintance with O'Brien is from a letter from Colonel Ochterlony, then Political Agent at Ludhiana, to the Government of India, the date being that when the British were being forced into a war with Nepal, and naturally anxious to avail themselves of any troops used to mountain warfare.

Ochterlony's notice runs* :—

" 3rd June, 1814. Sansar Chand has a considerable body of troops commanded by a deserter who now calls himself O'Brien, but was enlisted under another name I

* Ludhiana Residency Records, 1814—1816, page 383.

cannot at this moment recall, but is well known in the 8th or 24th Dragoons, and in his new capacity, professes to be very anxious to serve his country."

The traveller Moorcroft, who passed through Kangra in 1820, has left us the following account of how O'Brien came to leave the English service, and enter that of Sansar Chand * :—

" At Sujanpur I was met by Mr. O'Brien, an Irishman in the Raja's service. Mr. O'Brien is a strong, stout man, about 40 years of age, and was once a dragoon in the 8th, or Royal Irish. It is said that, having gone on guard without some of his accoutrements, he was reprimanded by the officer, and on his replying insolently, the officer struck, or touched him, with his cane. O'Brien knocked him down with the butt end of his carbine, and then put spurs to his horse and galloped off. Not daring to return to his regiment, he wandered about the country for some time, and at last found service with Sansar Chand, for whom he has established a factory of small arms and raised and disciplined a force of 1,400 men.

" There is also an Englishman named James in Sansar Chand's service. He has been a soldier, but denies ever having engaged in either the King's or Company's service in India. He is an illiterate, but ingenious man, with some practical skill in gunnery. Both these men are of use to the Raja and might be of more, but their means are limited, and their habits not of the most temperate description.........Ranjit Singh exacts military service from Sansar Chand, and put him foremost in the attack on the Kahular Raja, whose forts were taken by the troops and artillery of Sansar Chand, under O'Brien and James."

Ochterlony was not certain as to whether O'Brien belonged to the 8th or 24th Light Dragoons, but it is possible that he belonged to both, having been transferred from the 24th to the 8th when the former left India. The 24th Dragoon regiment was one of seven raised in 1785 for service in the East and West Indies, this type of soldier being then in special favour. The 24th, 27th and 29th also saw much service in India and the Peninsular

* Travels of Moorcroft and Trebeck, Volume I, pages 125-26.

war before they were broken up or disbanded, between 1812 and 1821. The 24th endured longest, and as the others dropped out, received successive new numbers, finally ending as the 19th, under which number we shall meet several of its members in these pages. The present 19th was raised in 1859, and has inherited the honours of the old regiment.

We may imagine the sensation caused by this wandering Feringhi soldier, as, fully armed and mounted, he drifted in his once-gorgeous, but now time-stained, uniform, through the quiet mud-walled villages of the plains, and the stone huts of the hills, in the hope of finding employment, or at least subsistence, and especially anxious to place as wide a distance as possible between himself and that army, where an inevitable death awaited him. Such offences as his were unpardonable. Like so many Feringhi wanderers at that date, he was hospitably treated, if not welcomed, for those were the days when Europeans of low degree could pass unharmed through even the wildest district of India or Asia. It was not until the first Afghan War had destroyed trust in British honour and good faith that northern India became unsafe for the solitary European.

In what year O'Brien entered the service of Sansar Chand is uncertain, but judging by the fact that by 1814 he had raised and trained a considerable body of troops, well armed, accoutred, and provided with guns and munitions, made under his own supervision, he must have been employed for some years before that date. Not only was he commander of the troops, but had the general control of the Raja's affairs, both public and private, and that he was a popular administrator is shown by the fact that 100 years after the death of its owner, his name is still reverenced in the Kangra Valley. Yet, as he left Rs. 60,000 he did not, though administering wisely, neglect the main chance.

His troops were stationed at Sujanpur, in the Kangra Valley, within an enclosure surrounded by a wall some five

miles in circumference, and having but a single entrance where a guard was always stationed. Contemporary records name it the Telinga Lines (Telinga being the Hindustani name for regular soldiers). He assumed the title of Colonel, and though self-conferred, the fact of his commanding over 1,000 men we think gives him some claim to that title.

Were it not for the Nepal War of 1814-1815, we should know no more of O'Brien than the legends of the Kangra Valley, and the casual mention by Moorcroft. But the need for auxiliary troops used to mountaineering caused the British to endeavour to enlist such as were owned by the rajah, adjacent to Nepal, and hence O'Brien's troops, which were probably the best of the lot, would be especially useful. In the correspondence concerning them, O'Brien appears, first as the mouthpiece of his employer, and later, when it became evident that this ruler was only temporising with the British, on his own account. Why Sansar Chand failed to co-operate with the British, is evident from the following paragraph :—

*" When the Gurkha War broke out in 1814, Ranjit Singh was not asked to give assistance, but Sansar Chand was called upon by the British representative to attack the Gurkhas and their allies—a hasty requisition which produced a remonstrance from Ranjit Singh, and an admission on the part of Sir David Ochterlony that his supremacy was not questioned, whilst the experienced Hindu Chief had forborne to commit himself with either state by promising much and doing little."

How Sansar Chand dealt with the British is shown by the following letter, from O'Brien, who conducted all the correspondence :—

To—Colonel Ochterlony.

*September 12th, 1814.*

†" I received your letter and was happy to hear that you have arrived in the mountains. I received a letter

* Cunningham's History of the Sikhs, page 149.

† Papers on Nepal War, 1814-1815.

that arrived to the Raja on the 4th instant of this month, and the Raja was well pleased with the letter and has ordered all his troops to be in readiness, and he ordered me to get one light piece of cannon and rounds of grape to be in readiness to march at the smallest notice. The Raja says if you send for him at twelve to-night he will be very pleased to march at once to meet you, to be of what service he can to yourself and the Honourable Company.

(Sd.) WILLIAM O'BRIEN."

The need for obtaining the services of Sansar Chand's troops, whether from himself or from O'Brien, lay in the fact that Bilaspur, through which the Gurkha commander drew his main supplies and some support (before its Raja come over to the British) lay some 60 miles only from Sujarpur and was very open to attack from that side. The necessity increased so much that the Government were willing to make some concessions to obtain O'Brien's services, and this is shown by the letter from the Commander-in-Chief, which we now quote * :—

" *November 21st, 1814.*—The Commander-in-Chief is happy to perceive from O'Brien's letter, which is contained in your despatch of the 30th inst., and the orders you have transmitted him in reply that a very useful diversion is likely to be made in your favour in the Bilaspur quarter. Adverting to the position in which O'Brien stands to his own country as a deserter from the Army, and the penalty to which he is liable, the Right Honourable the Commander-in-Chief thinks it would be advisable and proper, now that he is about to co-operate in our cause, that a free pardon should be extended to him in consideration of the zeal which he has shown and his readiness to obey your orders.

" The Commander-in-Chief accordingly authorises and empowers you to convey to him an assurance that you will obtain both that and the further consideration and countenance of the Commander-in-Chief in proportion to the services he renders you.

HEADQUARTERS. (Sd). G. H. FAGAN."

* Papers on Nepal War, 1814-1815.

Between the date of this and the following letter, the British had suffered some severe reverses, so that the need of reinforcements or military diversions had become insistent. Hence the remarks which accompanied a letter from O'Brien, that we have not been able to trace. Fortunately, the report mentioned therein has been copied, and, as this gives an interesting account of his troops, and the manner in which these chiefs maintained their forces, we give it in full* :—

"*18th January, 1815.*—The object of this letter seems to be for O'Brien to be taken into British service with the troops under his command. As in view of the fact Sansar Chand had evaded his voluntary promise to co-operate against the Gurkhas, there can be no objection to employing O'Brien's troops. They would receive the same pay as our own, but no permanent promise of employment can be made, except perhaps to O'Brien, and a few of his principal officers."

The report runs :—

"Munsa Ram, the sowar who brought the letter, says he left Shujanpur with O'Brien's letter twenty-two days ago, accompanied by the two sowars who were with him, and that the object of his journey was to deliver to the Governor-General the letter which he presented and to return with a reply to his master. He says that O'Brien has under his command two battalions of one thousand men each, well armed and accoutred with eight guns and two or three hundred horse, that the men are paid by grants of land, and that O'Brien has two purgannahs of Jiadad, besides other advantages for the maintenance of his troops.

"That the arms, ordnance, and accoutrements of all descriptions are manufactured by himself. The sowar had with him a matchlock, sword, and horse furniture, gunpowder and pouch, which he states to be the manufacture of O'Brien. The sword, guns, and saddle all had his name stamped upon them. He says that O'Brien had the general control of the Raja's affairs, and was generally looked up to by the people, but of late some

* Punjab Records, Book No. 9, letter No. 7.

misunderstanding had occurred between him and the Raja. He states that O'Brien's cantonment is situated on the left bank of the Beas, the residence of the Raja being on the opposite bank. The sowar said that no particular secrecy was observed in despatching him, though he received his orders apart.''

The next letter introduces another European, and is also worth quoting, as showing Ochterlony's decided opinions and expressive manner* :—

" Mr. Heaney,—

I received your letter. If you bring 1,000 good hill-men into my camp one month from this date, I will ensure you from Government Rs. 250 per month for life. As for MacDonald, as he was never in any service, King's or Company's, I can make him no promise, but if he behaves well with the troops you bring he will not be unrewarded. I shall certainly not give the men you bring the same pay as our sepahis, but will go as far as Rs. 5 or Rs. 6, according to their general character as soldiers. The Raja of Bilaspur's country, on this side of the Sutlej, is under protection of the British, and on your side that of Ranjit Singh, and must not be touched. If your Raja had not been a fool and a liar, it might have been his before he (Bilaspur) accepted British protection. Whatever Bilaspur may be, he cannot be worse than your own master.''

In reply, O'Brien wrote† :—

" *22nd March, 1815.*—Colonel Ochterlony,—I have received your letter, and have 1,000 good hill-men. I have also told the Raja I am leaving his service. All I am waiting for is to get some troops settled that I have under my command. I have eight or nine horses that I mean to dispose of, for I cannot keep them on Rs. 250 per month, as also I have some other property I mean to dispose of. I can join you in 20 to 25 days, as these mountaineers are very false people and great liars. I will let you know the wages of the whole of them when I meet you, which will be as quick as possible the accounts are settled.

(Sd.) MATTHEW HEANEY.''

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* Punjab Records, Book No. 18, letter No. 10.
† Punjab Records, Book No. 18, letter No. 11.

Heaney was the name under which O'Brien enlisted, for at that time the army being considered the very meanest occupation, quite a number of men dropped their identity when joining it. His indignation concerning "the falsity of the mountaineers," is edifying, considering his own very dubious tactics, for we strongly doubt if he had ever entertained any serious intention of quitting Sansar Chand's service. Therein he was a person of consequence, whereas in British territory he would have been merely a pardoned deserter, who would degenerate into a drunken loafer, despised by everyone, especially the Indians, with whom he would have had to consort. Possibly he may have had some muddled intentions of regaining status among his countrymen, but whatever they were, they ended in nothing, as did the negotiations with Ochterlony, the result of which is shown in the following letter* :—

"A *harkaru* despatched on the 23rd ult., with a letter from Colonel Ochterlony for Mr. O'Brien, said that he arrived at Shujanpur about 3 P.M. on the 27th, and went to the residence of Mr. O'Brien, whom he found in the utmost intoxication. He was supported in bed by two servants to receive the letter from the *harkaru*, and MacDonald was sent for to read it. O'Brien desired the *harkaru* to rest himself, which, as he could not obtain an answer, he did. For three days O'Brien remained in his zenana in an uninterrupted state of drunkenness, and on the 30th, fell into a fever, and desisted from drinking, when his senses returned. His *darogah* then asked what orders he had for the *harkaru*, and O'Brien desired that he should be taken to the Raja, which was done.

"The Raja was much enraged at O'Brien's correspondence with the English without his permission and authority, and said that if the English letters contained nothing amiss, the *harkaru* should have brought others in Persian for him to the like purport. He finally ordered the *harkaru* to be turned out of the city, which was done, though late in the day. The *harkaru* begged the *darogah*

* Punjab Records, Book No. 18, letter No. 16.

to give him some sort of an answer, even a verbal one, but the latter replied that O'Brien was not in a fit state to give any, and one might be sent afterwards, if necessary.

" O'Brien had no newly engaged troops, but only the Raja's battalions, which he was engaged to drill. The Mirza, who visited this camp lately, had been entertaining men and had procured nearly 100, when the Raja, irritated at some excesses of O'Brien and MacDonald, and having discovered their correspondence with the English, and likewise the activities of the Mirza, put an immediate stop to them, and disbanded those already collected.

" One of the excesses committed by O'Brien and MacDonald during the *harkaru's* stay at Shujanpur was an outrage and insult to a *musahib* of Ranjit Singh, then residing with Sansar Chand. On this occasion the Raja seemed to have considered MacDonald most culpable, for he immediately ordered him to quit the city, to which he prohibited him from returning.

" The *harkaru* learnt that O'Brien was frequently under the influence of excessive intoxication for nearly a fortnight, when the fit usually terminated as on the present occasion, by a severe illness, after which he would continue well and sober for a short time."

Some historians have lamented the lack of intimate details concerning the private lives of the lower classes of adventurers, who took service with Indian Princes. Here then are some, and the life led by O'Brien may be considered typical of most of the others.

There are still other mentions of O'Brien in the Punjab Records, of which the following is the most important, as it shows the declared policy of the Government of India regarding deserters who entered foreign service :—

*" *28th November, 1815.*—From Mr. Metcalfe, Resident at Delhi, to the Government of India. I lately noticed that a European had been received and entertained at Sansar Chand's Court, whom I suspect to be one

* Punjab Records, Book No. 17, letter No. 65.

of the deserters from Karnal. We cannot call upon Ranjit Singh to deliver up these deserters, who may have taken service with him, for he could not consistently comply with honour. To do so would be discreditable to the weakest state in India. I rather think the men are with that man in Sansar Chand's service, who calls himself Colonel O'Brien, and who is a deserter from the 24th Light Dragoons, for he has made several attempts to induce Europeans to desert, and is probably the cause of the late desertions."

Concerning these deserters, there were quite a number reported as missing between the years 1809 to 1820, and as some seven or eight are reported as having failed to return, or be recovered, we may assume that, unless they died whilst wandering, some of them entered the services of Sansar Chand, or Ranjit Singh, or even travelled further afield.

In February, 1819, the troops under O'Brien and James were employed by Ranjit Singh, against the Raja of Kahlur, who, though he owned lands on either side of the Sutlej, had his capital at Bilaspur, under British protection. Sansar Chand, acting in conjunction with a Sikh force under Desa Singh, captured the forts of Pichrota, Nakalgarh, and Biholi Devi, and occupied the territory on the right bank of the Sutlej. Having succeeded so far, they had the audacity to march on Bilaspur, but this proving too much for British patience, a peremptory demand was sent to Ranjit Singh for the withdrawal of his troops, with which he wisely complied, and he was also compelled to restore all his conquests.

Other letters concerning O'Brien relate to the purchase of arms* and munitions from the British, these being those taken from the Gurkhas, and †to the British allowances made to the widows of Sansar Chand. These are in his own handwriting, and the last is dated the 3rd of March, 1827. To judge by the next letter, which

* Punjab Records, Book No. 18, letter No. 89.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 27, letter No. 166.

is dated three months later, he must have died shortly after.

*The letter alluded to is a claim against the estate of O'Brien by a cloth merchant of Ludhiana, for a sum of Rs. 600 and contains the interesting information that O'Brien had died worth Rs. 60,000, all of which estate had been sequestrated by the son of Sansar Chand, who declined to pay the debt. In any case, the Raja only got most of his own back.

Apparently O'Brien left no descendants, or if he did they became merged into the maternal nation. It is not known who raised the monument of the two sculptured horses, or gave his bones decent sepulture, but it may be assumed that Sansar Chand's son did so, possibly out of gratitude for the windfall which he had just received.

*James Sahib, Feringhi.*

Though we find no mention of this individual in the correspondence concerning O'Brien, we may assume that he was with him at the time. Also, though he denies ever having served "King or Company," James must have been a deserter, and probably one of the men to whom Metcalfe's letters allude, for no person of his degree could have paid his own passage to India. That he was a run-away seaman seems equally doubtful, for the distances from the seaport of India to the Kangra Valley were too immense for a man to tramp through unobserved.

It should be remembered that since the days when George Thomas tramped from Madras to Delhi, the British occupation had widely extended, and any tramping European would have had small chance of escaping observation, unless like Masson and Potter, he plunged into the desert routes immediately after leaving a British military station.

The reports concerning the French officers had revealed the existence of other Europeans in Ranjit Singh's

* Punjab Records, Book No. 19, letter No. 42.

service, and accordingly the Agent at Ludhiana asked for information concerning Jackson, " said to be a General of Artillery," and another person named Carron. Of him hereafter. The following reply was returned* :—

" *21st August, 1823.*—Jackson is James, usually called James Sahib, Feringhi, his name having been corrupted by Hindustani pronunciation. He is a Yorkshire man and has charge of a brigade of guns. He was for a time at Sansar Chand's Court but Matthew Heaney and he differed in opinion, and James quitted there and came to Ranjit Singh in 1820." Quite possibly Ranjit Singh, for whom James had fought when serving Sansar Chand, may have induced him to exchange services.

A report from the news-writer at Lahore published in the Calcutta Journal of 1822 mentioning Jackson as a General of artillery in Ranjit Singh's service, the editor identifies him with a Lieut. Jackson, who resigned the Bengal Artillery in 1805. However, a correspondent corrects this stating that the Lieut. Jackson referred to did not enter Ranjit Singh's service but that of the Czar of Russia.

It is quite possible that the man's proper name may have been Jackson, for many of these adventurers dropped their surname in favour of their Christian one, doubtless for sufficient reasons. The last we hear of him is the report of his death in 1825, when his brigade of guns was made over to William Leigh.

*MacDonald.*

This man was probably one of the deserters mentioned as having been entertained at Sansar Chand's Court. Quite probably, after his expulsion from Shujanpur for complicity in the insult to the Lahore news-writer, MacDonald also went on to Lahore, and there secured employment. As he was literate, and James or Jackson was not, he might be identified with the James Junior whom Ranjit Singh employed to write the letter purport-

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* Punjab Records, Book No. 71, letter No. 141.

ing to be from Moorcroft to the French officers in the endeavour to entrap them, for his Christian name may also have been James, and called Junior as Jackson was older and senior in rank.

*Jones.*

But for Masson, the traveller, we should know nothing of this man. However, we are inclined to identify him with James or Jackson for we know that Ranjit Singh employed the forces of Sansar Chand, his feudatory, on several occasions. Here follows Masson's mention :—

*" Ranjit Singh made a feint of attacking Khanpur, a fort some 20 kos distant from Multan, into which the deluded Nawab immediately threw a better part of his forces. Ranjit Singh immediately countermarched and invested the capital. The defence was most obstinate and the attack threatened to end, like all former ones, in failure, when an adventurer named Jones, in the Sikh service, took charge of the guns, advanced them up to the citadel and breached it, thus enabling the Akalis to storm."

*Price.*

This is the first European known to have been employed by Ranjit Singh in a military capacity. All we know of him is copied from the Punjab Records, and follows. The letter is from Ochterlony, then commanding the force assembled at Ludhiana, as a counterpoise to Ranjit Singh's threats to the cis-Sutlej states under British protection. Though quite a number of Hindustani and Gurkha soldiers had deserted to Ranjit Singh, this was the first recorded case of a European, and Ochterlony, apprehensive of the effects of the example, sent a strong letter to the Khalsa commander, of which the letter following shows the result† :—

" *3rd May, 1809.*—I have to report that an artilleryman named Price deserted from my camp at Ludhiana,

* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume I, page 397.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 10, letter No. 170.

and has been traced into that of Dewan Mokham Chand. I demanded our deserter from the Dewan, who in his reply acknowledged that a European *did* come to his camp for service, but that he rejected his application and directed him to return to my camp. I was informed by my intelligence officer that this is incorrect, for the man was sent off to Nur Mohallah on the road to Amritsar, and is now at Lahore. I send a copy of the Dewan's reply and my letter to the envoy at Amritsar (Metcalfe), but as the Raja cloaks the protection of our deserters, I am afraid that the result of my application will be as unsuccessful as my appeal to the Dewan."

Nothing was ever heard of Price.

*Gordon or Carron.*

According to the Khalsa Pay Rolls, Gordon, often miscalled Carron, a mistake due to Hindustani pronunciation, was *engaged as an infantry instructor in the year 1820, and a year later commanded No. 8 Battalion of the regulars.

Though one report by the news-writer states that he was a deserter from the Bengal Horse Artillery, this is incorrect, unless he was like John Holmes, a trumpeter, that being the only position open to men of mixed blood in the Company's forces during the Nineteenth Century, for Dr. Murray expressly states that he was of mixed blood.

In July 1822 the battalion commanded by Gordon was brought out for Allard and Ventura to try their skill upon, and apparently did so well that it was incorporated into the Fauj-i-Khas or French Legion.

Apparently to console him for the loss of his battalion Gordon was given orders to raise a new cavalry regiment of Sikhs to be entitled the Akal, or Immortal regiment, and being a versatile soldier gained the good opinion of Dr. Murray who thus speaks of the regiment :—

* Khalsa Durbar Records, Volume I, page 14.

*" Whilst the Raja was at breakfast two regiments of cavalry (about 2,000 men in all) had arrived and taken up ground in front. They were drawn up in line, and after performing a few evolutions which were done very slowly, they marched round in review by threes. The men were dressed in red jackets and pantaloons and had red puggries. They were good looking men and well mounted. The horses were also in good order. The first regiment had sabres and carbines slung in the usual manner along the right side and thigh. The 2nd Regiment was dressed and accoutred in the same manner but with matchlocks instead of carbines. The two regiments were commanded by Mr. Gordon, a half-caste in the Raja's service. After the review he came up and saluted the Raja and said something about the long arrears due the men. He was told that pay would be issued soon.

†" I went on the morning of the 8th to the inspection of the horse artillery and some cavalry. First came a corps of cavalry commanded by a Mr. Gordon, an Indo-Briton in the Maharajah's service. Mr Gordon's is a fine looking regiment, the men are well mounted and uniformly equipped, and dressed in the Sikh style. They are all Sikhs. Fine looking young men, the sons of the sirdars and gentry of the country. Each man rides his own horse and receives one rupee per day."

After this date the records are silent concerning Gordon until—

‡" *1st November, 1829.*—The Maharajah has discharged Mr. Gordon and sent him to the left bank of the Sutlej under escort of cavalry. The immediate cause of Mr. Gordon's discharge was that he used insolent expressions to the Maharajah in the presence of a target (at target practice). The Maharajah was displeased with his fire and ordered him to fire again, which he refused and used violent expressions to his Highness. In consequence he was severely reprimanded and sent to confinement for nine months. At the end of this time the Maharajah desired to take from him the cavalry regiment he had raised and give him an infantry batta-

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* Murray's Letters, 1st January 1827, No. 23/15/125.

† Murray's Letter, 20th April 1827, No. 7/21/125, paragraph 68.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 97, letter No. 136.

lion. Mr. Gordon rejected this, and was discharged. He has gone towards Gwalior."

This is the only recorded instance of any of the European officers of the Maharaja having been imprisoned. In all other cases they were merely dismissed, or fined. However, Gordon apparently repented his refusal of the infantry battalion, and was reinstated in the Khalsa Army, for Sohan Lal records* :—

"*March, 1833.*—Mr. Carron was called to the Durbar, and ordered to take his Najib Battalion and collect revenue from Pir Mahomed Khan of Peshawar. When he arrived within ten miles of Peshawar, Pir Mahomed sent him a present of some horses, an English sword and some jewels and entreated him to stay his hand and intercede with Ranjit Singh for a remission of revenue, Carron Sahib referred the letter to Ranjit Singh who told him to get as much as he could from Pir Mahomed."

His action in this matter so pleased the Maharaja that Carron was restored to his cavalry regiment and sent to Peshawar, where soon after he was killed at the Battle of Jamrood.

*Thomas Fukinaul.*

This is probably one of the men buried beside O'Brien, and what we know of him is as follows :—

†"*15th July, 1822.*—The jemadar in charge of the gates reported that a Feringhi had arrived and sought an audience with the Raja, but without orders he could not admit him. The Raja desired him to be admitted, and questioned him as to whence he had come, and whither he was going. Feringhi replied that he was a Frenchman, who, with four other Europeans had left the service of Hyderabad and come to the Punjab to seek employment with Ranjit Singh. That the others had gone on to Lahore but he hearing of the Raja's great goodness to Europeans had sought his court and protection. Seeing his tattered condition, the Raja directed him to be given Rs. 10 with which to procure clothing, and taken to William O'Brien in the Telinga Lines. The Frenchman bowed and retired†." As he does from our pages.

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* Sohan Lal's Diary of date.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 93, letter No. 101.

*Jan Sahib.*

*"A Frenchman."*

Of this Frenchman, who had been employed in the service of the Barakzai sirdars, we know no more than the following* :—

"*April 29th, 1824.*—A Frenchman from Kabul, of the name of Jan Sahib (probably his Christian name was Jean) arrived at the residence of the Maharajah at Amritsar, and was immediately received into the service and given an allowance of Rs. 10 per diem. Curiosity being exceeding, I asked one of his servants why his master had come here, and from whence he came. He related that the Vakil of the Rajah had arrived at Peshawar, to whom the Sahib came and represented the exigencies of his situation, and sent a memorial through the Vakil to the Maharajah, as well as a friendly letter to the French officers, stating that he had received but Rs. 2 per diem from the Afghans, which was not sufficient for his support.

"As soon as the Maharajah read the memorial, he gave his sanction and invited the Frenchman to come and enter his service, sending at the same time Rs. 100 for his expenses on the road, which he took and came to the Presence. This is the cause of his arrival."

*William Leigh*, alias *Mahomed Khan.*

Instances of persons of British nationality becoming converts to Mahomedanism are rare in our history in India, very few being recorded. Of these the person following is an instance, our acquaintance with him commencing with the following report† :—

"*29th June, 1825.*—Mahomed Khan, the name of a Frenchman (*sic*) lately arrived from Herat, presented five rupees and was admitted to the Presence. The Maharajah enquired if he had any scientific experience. He replied that he had some knowledge of the occult sciences, besides other skilful acquirements, which he would exhibit. Whereupon the Maharajah gave him Rs. 200 for

* Punjab Records, Book No. 24, letter No. 79.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 25, letter No. 107.

were set down as due to mortal illness in time of peace, or in time of war as received in action.

Between the date of Leigh's flight from the army, and his appearance at Ranjit Singh's Court, many adventures and curious experiences must have filled in the period. He speaks of a perfect familiarity with Sindh, Afghanistan, and Khorassan generally, and doubtless this is correct, for such as he drifted, or travelled, far and wide in those remote regions. He may possibly have been the person whom Court mentions as commanding the artillery of Pir Dil Khan at Kandahar, though that person is described as a half-caste. Such a mistake is excusable, for a European leading the life that Leigh must have done would have been tanned considerably. Bearing in mind his antecedents, nationality, and apparent character, we may safely assume that Leigh could have unfolded a tale quite *equal to Gardiner's* narrative, and it is quite possible that Gardiner may have appropriated some of Leigh's adventures as his own, either from personal contact or hearsay.

Leigh's name does not appear in the Khalsa Rolls, unless under the name of Mahomed Khan, nor do we ever hear anything more of him. Possibly disappointed with the meagre command allotted to him, he soon passed onwards, or again, may have sunk into an obscure death and may lie in one of the many tombs which a few years ago were still in existence round Lahore, and were said to contain the bodies of Europeans who died in Ranjit Singh's service, but whose very names have been forgotten.

*Bell and Browne.*

All we know of these two men is from a short note in the autobiography of John Shipp, an extraordinary person who starting life as a workhouse boy conscripted into the army, gained two separate commissions from the ranks, and distinguished himself at the battle of Muckwanpore, in the Gurkha War of 1814-15, by killing the Gurkha General in a single handed combat with swords.

As early as 1806 the Gurkhas had formed regular battalions clothed and armed like the sepoy units of the Company. When the two men now mentioned had joined them, does not appear, nor have we been able to ascertain what became of them afterwards, unless Browne is identical with the Buran (Browne) Sahib, who commanded the troops of the Nawab of Bahawalpur, and died there just before Masson's arrival in 1826

Peace having been concluded, the two armies fraternised, and the British were permitted to see all they desired. Shipp writes :—

" On our entering the gate of Muckwanpore Fort the guard saluted us, the drummer beat the Grenadiers' march, and a small fifer played the tune. Both drum and fife were of English manufacture. We spent a pleasant hour with the Governor who had the politeness to parade his regiment for our inspection. I never saw a finer body of men in my life. They were as well armed, drilled, and equipped as our own native troops.

"............A most respectable young man dressed as an officer, complimented me on my swordsmanship......... He asked for one of our muskets, and put himself through the manual and platoon exercises giving himself the words of command in English. I never saw motions more cleanly, or compactly executed. I asked him where he learned English, and the English modes of drill. He replied ' from Browne ' who was a deserter from the Company's European Regiment. He added that a man named Bell, a deserter from the Company's foot artillery had also taught him his exercise, and Browne had instructed him in English. The former, he said, had been made Colonel of artillery, and the latter schoolmaster; but they had both been discharged at the commencement of the war."

## CHAPTER VI

### JEAN FRANCOIS ALLARD

Jean Francois Allard, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, of the Royal Order of Spain (instituted by Joseph Bonaparte) and of the Orders of the Punjab and Durrani Empire, was born at St. Tropez on the Mediterranean littoral in the year 1785. In December 1803, he enlisted in the 23rd Dragoons of the Line, with which he served in Italy until 1806, when he was promoted sergeant-major of Joseph Bonaparte's bodyguard, and two years later quartermaster of a regiment of Neapolitan dragoons, raised for service in Spain.

He served in Spain until 1814, being twice wounded in action, once severely, and in recognition of his services was given a combatant commission, the French and Spanish orders, and promoted lieutenant in the Imperial Dragoons of the Guard. A few months later he was promoted captain in the 7th Hussars of the Line, and appointed staff officer to Marechal Brune, with whom he served in various actions until the abdication of Napoleon, when he was placed on half pay. During the Hundred Days he joined Napoleon, with whom, as captain of Cuirassiers, he took part in the battle of Waterloo.

In consequence of his extreme Bonapartist sympathies, he was excluded from the general amnesty, and deprived of his half pay. What became of him during the next five or six years we have not been able to ascertain, other than from the following by Baron Hugel* :—

"M. Allard served with much distinction in the Imperial Army of France, and was regarded as an officer of great personal bravery, high qualifications and most conciliatory temper. Being excluded by his political views

* Travels in Kashmir, page 355.

from the royalist amnesty, he embarked for Egypt, and thence proceeded to the Court of Teheran. From hence he was prevailed upon by Ventura to quit a country where a ten months' residence had satisfied him that there was no chance of immediate employment under Shah Abbas. They travelled as merchants, and came through Kandahar to Lahore."

From this it would appear that Allard must have served some years with the Egyptian army, as did so many of the French officers who sought their fortunes abroad after the debacle at Waterloo. Where he first met with Ventura is not known, but apparently the pair entered Persia together. Another mention by Fontanier, a French traveller of the period, states that the two were advised to go to Lahore by the Russian ambassador, who probably had ulterior reasons for doing so. If so, he was disappointed, for neither ever attempted to serve the Russian cause, or advance it in any way; possibly there was no opportunity.

The travellers arrived at Lahore on the 23rd March, 1822, and, after considerable delay, were admitted into Ranjit Singh's service. As the details concerning their advent are fully set forth in our memoir on Ventura, we need do no more than add the news-writer's quaint description of Allard as " a man of dark features, small, with intelligent countenance, and with great firmness to observe a kind and conciliatory disposition to all the natives of high and low rank.* "

Allard was deputed to raise and train two regiments, one of dragoons, and one of lancers, and how these new formations acquitted themselves, at the battle of Nowshera, twelve months later, is best shown by the following quotation from Masson who probably had it from Allard himself† :—

" Ranjit Singh had not intended to cross the Indus at Attock, and probably the Yusufzaï imagined he could

* Punjab Records, Book No. 93, letter No. 54.

† Masson's Travels in Baluchistan, etc., Volume I, page 140.

not, owing to the rapid current, till, unable to control his anger, he stroked his beard and called upon the Sikhs to avenge the insults offered to their Guru. M. Allard, then present with his regiments of cavalry not long raised, strove to dissuade the Maharajah from the attempt, but ineffectually, and was ordered himself to cross the river.

"The Sikhs (Ghorcharras, not under Allard) had gallantly obeyed the call of their master, and precipitated themselves into the stream, but such was the violence of the current that not less than 1,200 were swept away and drowned. M. Allard then mounted his elephant and at the sound of his bugle, the disciplined troops passed over into the river in entire ranks, and the regularity and unity of their movement enabled the regiment to pass with but three casualties. Ranjit Singh at once descried the advantages conferred by discipline, and in his delight, ordered new levies."

However, the intention stopped at that, for the cavalry under Allard remained at the same strength until 1829, when it was increased to four regiments, totalling 2,425 men. Again, we must quote Masson,* who visited Lahore in 1829:—

"General Allard was then in command of some 3,000 cavalry, comprising one regiment of cavalry, one of lancers, and two of dragoons. He had also 2,000 artillery-men in training, manning some 200 guns of which most were horse artillery.

"The establishments of the General are on the most splendid scale, for the liberality of Ranjit Singh, who appreciated his merits, enabled him to enjoy all the luxuries of a refined taste, and to amass wealth besides."

Masson's figures do not agree with the pay-roll, and as regards the artillery, we should remark that these were not horse artillery, in the sense of the word as used by the British, but *horse-drawn* guns of various calibres. The main artillery depôt was always at Lahore, and at this period Allard must have been in an administrative charge, just as Court was of the arsenals and foundries.

* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume I, pages 405 and 432.



Cuirassier, Allard's Cavalry, 1838.

After the battle of Nowshera and the capture of Peshawar (subsequently returned to the Afghans), the Francese Campo (the term employed to denote the French trained brigade) went to Kangra, returning to Lahore on completion of that duty.

For the next few years we hear nothing of Allard, either through the news-writer's letters, or mentions by contemporary travellers, until the visit of the French naturalist, Jacquemont, to Lahore, in 1831, gives us some intimate glimpses of him and of Ranjit Singh's methods of dealing with the European officers and his subject states. Jacquemont* wrote :—

"M. Allard is quite the Suliman Bey of Ranjit Singh. (Suliman Bey was a Frenchman commanding the Egyptian forces at that time.) He goes from time to time to visit the British officers at Ludhiana; he is well paid at 100,000 francs a year, but is half a prisoner of Ranjit Singh, who takes care to make him spend the whole of his income every year in order to destroy any desire to leave him. He pursues the same policy with all European officers. Allard has literary knowledge and taste. The officers often excite Ranjit Singh's suspicions, and are compelled to be very circumspect in order to keep his confidence.

"It is possible that I may meet M. Allard again. The children of the mountain Rani are fighting about their inheritance (Jacquemont was writing from Bashahr) and Ranjit Singh has sent Allard to remove the nine lakhs, which are the cause of the trouble. If I could only get M. Allard's silver cross (Legion of Honour) changed to a gold one, it would make me perfectly happy. His name is respected through the whole of British India, and what is better than respect? There is also but one voice with regard to his humanity and justice, as well as his wisdom. He is always talking of France, and can never have enough of French company. He has adopted La Fayette's flag for his troops."

We next hear of Allard through the medium of Syed Mahomed Latif's History of the Punjab, and, as his

* Letters from India, Volume II, page 64.

narrative of the meeting of the Governor-General of India and the ruler of its last independent state, gives us, in addition to showing his preference for Allard, interesting details of Oriental magnificence, we shall quote somewhat fully from him* :—

"It was arranged that the meeting between the two chiefs should take place on the morning of the 26th October. Matters had progressed so far when the Maharajah's mind underwent a sudden change. He suspected some treachery, or foul play, and his advisers told him he had acted unwisely in leaving his own territory for an interview with the representative of British interests, and government, on foreign ground. He was advised to see the Governor-General at Amritsar, or postpone the interview altogether. The suspicious Maharajah sent for M. Allard late in the night to inform him that he would not attend the meeting the next day.

"That officer did his best to allay his master's suspicions, and staked his head that nothing unpleasant would happen. He left the Maharajah unsettled in mind and the astrologers were now summoned. After consulting their holy books, they declared the British were sincere friends of the Maharajah, and that the meeting would be conducive to intimate friendship between the states; but they advised the Maharajah to hold an apple in each hand on meeting the Governor, and to deliver him one of these as soon as he should see him, keeping one himself.

"If the apple were received by His Excellency, the result of the meeting would be highly favourable, and the proceedings continued without fear. Next morning a deputation from the Governor-General waited upon the Maharajah, and preparations were made for the visit. The Maharajah, early in the morning, sent 800 of M. Allard's cavalry, and they were followed by 3,000 of the best Ghorcharrah cavalry. When he had seen all these across, he and his principal attendants went over, all being mounted on elephants, and dressed in *basanti*, or yellow colour. Having crossed the open, the Sikh chief and his escort entered the Governor-General's Camp through a passage formed by a line of British troops.

* History of the Punjab, pages 452—455.

" Here he was met by the Governor-General, and the first thing he did after an interchange of compliments was to present his Lordship with the apple, which was forthwith taken. Delighted with this good omen, the Maharajah passed over into the *howdah* of the Governor-General, and the chiefs proceeded together to the audience tents followed by their suites

" Chairs were provided in the further tent for the officers of the Maharajah's suites and his sirdars. He took care to call out the name of each sirdar himself, and did not enter the tent until all had gone in and taken their seats. The Governor-General and the Maharajah then took their seats on chairs placed side by side. The whole presented a most picturesque appearance. Not only were the Sikhs dressed in yellow, the colour of spring, but their highly polished armour was worn with scarves also of that colour, and this combined with the diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones that decorated their heads, breasts and arms, rendered the scene a truly grand one.

" After a conversation, presents for the Maharajah his suite were brought in. These consisted of fifty-one trays, one for each year of his life, in which were arranged a variety of stuffs from Calcutta, Dacca, and Benares, jewels of price, pearl necklaces, serpeches* set with diamonds, armlets, a jewelled sword and a handsome matchlock. To these were added a fine Burmese elephant and two horses from the Hissar stud, all for the Maharajah. Twenty-one trays with rich stuffs were laid out for the heir apparent, besides a horse equipped with gold and silver ornaments. Dresses of honour were also laid out for the sirdars. His Highness carefully examined each article of his own presents, and presented the tray bearers and bandsmen in attendance with a purse of two thousand rupees.

" His Excellency the Governor-General paid a return visit the next day. Great preparations were made in the Maharajah's camp for his reception. Tents of embroidered Cashmere work were pitched at the place fixed for the interview, and from here to the river a double line of troops were formed of the regular brigades. His Lordship

* Serpeche: Ornament for the turban.

crossed the river escorted by lancers, and headed by mounted bandsmen and was met at the Bridge of Boats by the Maharajah himself. When both the chiefs had seated themselves, a Royal salute was thundered forth.

"In the Sikh camp the shamianas of beautiful Cashmere work occupied a great space. That under which the Maharajah and Governor-General sat was embroidered with pearls and jewels. The floor cloth was of embroidered silk, richly worked in gold and silver. On one side was a bedstead with curtains of exquisitely fine gold cloth, and fringes worked with pearls and rubies of great value. The Governor-General was provided with a throne worked with gold. The Maharajah sat on his right in a golden chair. When all were seated, the Maharajah had all his officers and sirdars of state presented in succession to the Governor-General, and each of these presented a gold mohur to his Lordship, which was touched and remitted.

"The Maharajah's horses, magnificently equipped, were then brought in and passed in review. His Highness, as usual, telling their names and merits as they passed. Dancing girls were then brought in, who by their holiday attire, added to the picturesqueness of the scene. When the time for departure arrived, the presents for the Governor-General and staff were brought forward. Those for his Lordship were arranged in 101 trays (the Royal number) and consisted of rich stuffs from Cashmere and parts of the Punjab, jewels and single diamonds, all in great size, numbering seven. There were also ten matchlocks, a sword, two boxes with arrows, and a shield, all set with precious stones, several gold and silver utensils, and a bedstead with curtains of gold and silver cloth, completely furnished. To this were added two fine horses with superb trappings and an elephant with a silver *howdah*.

"The following four days were passed in entertainments, and reviews, after which the parties separated and marched home."

Amongst the officers in Lord William Bentinck's camp was Skinner,* the famous Eurasian commander of

* Life of James Skinner, Volume II, page 214.

irregular horse, who records his opinion that Allard's cavalry were distinctly inferior to those of the British, an opinion corroborated by others. But that this was no fault of Allard's is also acknowledged, the reason given being the reluctance of Ranjit Singh to spend any more than could be extracted from him on the regular cavalry. That this sank still lower within the next few years is shown by the Lahore Akhbar, of 23rd August, 1834* :—

"The irregularity with which Ranjit Singh's troops are paid, and the arbitrary fines levied upon them at the partial distributions of pay, has raised a general discontent throughout the whole army, which is likely to effect its organisation to a considerable degree if the Maharajah does not refrain in time from the reckless disregard he is beginning to show for their interests and claims. Out of the regiments of cavalry raised by M. Allard but one remains, the others having been dispersed, and the French officers had ceased to enjoy the consideration they once enjoyed."

In any case, loss of esteem did not mean any diminution of emoluments, for though, like Allard's cavalry, the European officers suffered cycles of high favour, or comparative disregard, their pay was never touched. But, at this period, Allard had other matters to worry him, one being the loss of his daughter, and the other that of all the money he had managed to accumulate, which disappeared in the failure of Palmer's Bank, a great financial and commercial concern, whose crash involved many Europeans in ruin, for this *quasi*-Government concern banked for most of those in India.

His health having suffered from his long sojourn abroad, and his wife being also desirous of taking the remaining children home to France for education, caused him to apply for long leave, and of the negotiations connected therewith we give the following† :—

"M. Allard sent in an application for leave to visit his own country. The Maharajah directed Jemadar Khushal

* Punjab Records, Book No. 140, letter No. 68.
† Punjab Records, Book No. 139, letter No. 3.

Singh to go to M. Allard and persuade him to take Rs. 30,000 worth of pushmina (Cashmere shawls) in compensation for his pay, and tell him that he may go if he wishes. He (the Jemadar) went, and coming back in an hour and a half, informed the Maharajah that M. Allard would not consent to receive his pay in pushmina, as it would be a loss to him The Maharajah said with an angry countenance, that when M. Allard and Ventura came from their country, they looked poor and indigent (*sic*) but now having made lakhs of rupees they importuned him with their solicitations.

" The Maharajah then asked M Allard by what route he proposed to go to his country. He replied he would go by way of Bahawalpur and Bombay. The Maharajah asked if he would see M. Ventura on the way, when he would make M. Ventura discharge his arrears of salary (saving himself the agony of parting with so much cash). Jemadar Khushal Singh and Bhai Gurmukh Singh were directed to go to M. Allard and inform him that lakhs of rupees had been spent in disciplining the regiments, which after his departure would fall into confusion and disorder. They were to desire him to put off his design of returning to his own country at present. They went, and coming back in an hour and a half, informed the Maharajah that M. Allard was inflexible in his design.

" Kour Kharak Singh informed the Maharajah that M. Allard had sent for bankers from the city in order to sell his silver articles. The Maharajah complained that though every effort had been made to dissuade M. Allard from going, yet he would not consent.

" The Maharajah said to M. Allard that as he had served him for twelve years, he had strong feelings of affection for him, in consequence of which the Maharajah received preparations for departure with regret. He should therefore postpone his departure for some time when the Maharajah would reward him more than before. M. Allard was directed to receive Rs. 30,000 worth of pushmina in compensation for his salary, and informed that until his return from his country, he would receive half his pay according to the English system.

"Khushal Singh suggested to the Maharajah that M. Allard wished to borrow Rs. 40,000 from the Maharajah, but the Maharajah replied that as his home was so many thousands of miles away it might not be prudent to lend him so much money, but that if he desired he might have the same amount in pushmina.

"M. Allard was desired to remain one year more when he would be dismissed with every mark of honour. He replied that he would go now, but return after one year and a half to request leave once more. A khillat containing eleven pieces of cloth, a string of pearls, a serpeche, and a pair of bracelets were presented to him, and Misr Kali Ram was directed to pay him Rs. 30,000 worth of pushmina. M. Allard was directed to attend the court till his departure (for Peshawar, where his regiments were stationed)."

At the end of eighteen months later, Allard obtained the desired leave with a promise of re-employment on his return, and, taking his wife and children with him, set out for Europe *viâ* Calcutta on the 15th June, 1834, having received a passport through British dominions, and several letters he was desired personally to deliver to the Governor-General at Calcutta, or his representative. Eighteen months later he returned alone again through Calcutta, which at that period seems to have been the favourite port of arrival for passengers from Europe for up-country.

He brought with him a large consignment of arms,* cuirasses, pistols, carbines, and other munitions, the outlay on which had so exhausted his funds that he applied for, and received, a loan from the Government of India to enable him to send them up-country. The total amount was Rs. 40,000, and in connection with the repayment, we find that at that period the official currency was composed of two entirely different classes of rupees. These rupees were called Nanakshahi (Farakhabad) and Sicca rupees, the first being of the lower value, and when Allard repaid the money, he did so in Nanakshahi, though he had received Sicca.

* Punjab Records, Book No. 118, letter No. 92.

There is voluminous correspondence concerning this, the difference being about Rs. 700, and the money was not repaid until after Allard's death, when his nephew, Benjamin Allard, who came out from France to administer the estate, did so out of the Rs. 25,000 which was the sum total of Allard's estate in India.

On his arrival at Lahore, he was received by Ranjit Singh with much cordiality, and so welcome were the articles he brought with him that he was not only paid in full for them, but given a sum of Rs. 30,000 as leave pay. It must have been this unexpected windfall which caused the General to burst forth into the following effusion which he recited in Persian, to the delight of the Maharaja, or, it may have been the poem which caused the generosity :—

O God, may my King live long;
May the firmament be as a slave in his service;
May I reach his Royal Court and be honoured;
And should I ever disobey his command;
May death come over me.
When I die let my grave be in Lahore;
And my remains be interred in Anarkullee*.

Little as he may have really desired it, the wish was prophetic, for he was buried beside his daughter in the little mausoleum which still stands on an old brick kiln mound in the grounds of Kapurthala House, at Lahore, formerly Allard's own residence.

Some unpleasantness ensued between Allard and the British Government, for, relying on some complimentary expressions, addressed to the King of France, Allard had believed that he (Ranjit Singh) really desired to have a representative at Lahore, and came provided with a letter from King Louis Philippe appointing himself to that post. A copy of this was sent to the Government of India, who so greatly resented the appointment of any continental representative to a state on their borders that Allard was

* History of the Punjab, page 475.

forced to disavow the intention, and explain that the letter was merely a friendly one from King Louis Philippe to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

His cavalry now enjoyed a cycle of favour, for the new cuirasses so pleased the Maharaja that he gave orders for two regiments to be supplied with them. The balance of those required were made at Wazirabad, and, judging by the specimens that still survive, were of quite creditable workmanship. There are also a number of French-made cuirasses in the old armoury at Lahore, and these may be distinguished by a Gallic cock, surrounded by a laurel wreath, on the brass faced breastplate. To judge by the fact that they were made at Klingenthal, in Saxony, some five years before, they were probably second-hand.

It was of these regiments that Wood and others spoke so appreciatively, and the fact of their excellent training and condition may have been due to Mouton, the *ex*-captain of Cuirassiers, whom Allard brought out with him.

Allard died of heart failure at Peshawar on 23rd January, 1839, and in accordance with his last request, his body was brought down from Peshawar. Salutes were fired at every principal station through which the body passed on its route, and on arrival at Lahore, the three mile stretch from Shahdara to Anarkali was lined with troops, and minute guns fired during the progress of the body to its last home. Barr, who had just arrived in Lahore, thus describes the closing scenes in Allard's career:—

*" As we approached the city we heard a salute, and were informed that it was being fired in honour of General Allard, who had died in Peshawar, and whose body was now being brought to the capital for interment. Regiments were paraded in honour of his memory, for he was beloved by both European and Indian alike. He died on 23rd January, 1839, aged 52 years (*sic*), and left a wife

* Journal of a March, etc., page 72.

and family in France. He was much beloved by the Maharajah, and they were afraid to tell him of Allard's death, his own health being precarious

*" With Dr. Benet, the Maharajah's doctor, we went to Allard's country house, where his body was lying in state. The residence is decorated inside and out with paintings of dragoons, foot soldiers, and lancers, half as large as life. The wide verandahs have the same display of paintings, and also fountains at intervals, which keep the apartment cool in summer. The upper rooms are all covered with looking glasses, and at the corners are dormitories, very comfortable and airy. Doctor Benet showed us a shawl which was being made by Allard for the Queen of France at a cost of Rs. 3,000............Allard's portrait bespeaks him a man of firmness and decision of character, and a handsome and benevolent man. He wore a uniform somewhat resembling that of our Horse Artillery, with two orders, one being the Legion of Honour, and the other Ranjit's new order. In another picture were the pretty faces of his Kashmiri wife and his children, who were dressed in the costume of her country, and drew the admiration of all."

Perhaps some day a fitting memorial may be erected by his countrymen over the remains of this worthy old adventurer and soldier of the First Empire.

* Journal of a March, etc., page 83.



General Ventura.

# CHAPTER VII

## JEAN BAPTISTE VENTURA, COUNT DE MANDI

The only details forthcoming concerning the ancestry, birth, and early military career of this, the most able of all Ranjit Singh's European soldiers, are fragmentary and incomplete.

Disregarding Dr. Wolff's statement that he was a Jew of Modena, whose real name was Reuben Bin Toora, as not proven, and conflicting with other evidence, we have come to the conclusion that Ventura, if this were his real name, and not a mere contraction of Adventura, or adventurer, was really a Modenese of Christian birth. For this we have his own statement to Mrs. Mackenzie in 1849* that his grand-nephew was a Dominican monk, then private secretary to Pius IX. That the spelling of his Christian names is distinctively French may be due to the fact that he practically renounced his Italian nationality on quitting Italy for the East, and never returned to it.

He appears to have been born about 1792-93, and commissioned into the Modenese contingent of the Italian Army, raised by Joseph Bonaparte for Napoleon. He served with this in various campaigns, including the Battle of Wagram, the Russian Campaign of 1812†, and finally at the Battle of Waterloo. Where he gained his Cross is not stated, but probably the archives of the Legion of Honour might give the details and further enlighten us about his services to Napoleon.

Prinsep states that Ventura was a ‡Colonel of Infantry under Napoleon, and possibly this is correct, for the very heavy casualties consequent on Napoleon's fre-

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* Life in Mission, Camp and Zenana, page 170.

† In this campaign the Italian contingent was commanded by Eugene de Beauharnais, Napoleon's stepson—*vide infra*.

‡ Ranjit Singh, page 133.

quent campaigns gave early and rapid promotion to the survivors, Colonels of 20 and Generals of 30 being not uncommon. After the downfall of Napoleon, his auxiliaries reverted to their own country, and having served with the man who conquered them, were soon got rid of.

As regards the Modenese, Baron Hugel writes—

*" They were treated with especial severity, being excluded from the general amnesty granted to all other Italian soldiers, which included in the terms of capitulation of the Italian Army the placing of all its officers on an equal footing with the Austrians."—(*Note.*—In the general share out of Napoleon's Empire, Italy, ruled for him by his brother Joseph, fell to the share of Austria, and so remained until the mid-19th century. Such of the officers as had not specially distinguished themselves by serving Napoleon were incorporated with their soldiers into the Austrian Army.)

In what manner Ventura passed the intermediate years between 1816 and 1820 we cannot discover, but a chance remark by Senor Oms to Dr. Murray that he had met Ventura in Constantinople some years before may indicate that he served with the Turkish or Egyptian Armies, as did so many Bonapartist officers in like case.

How he and Allard fared in Persia, and why they quitted it is given in Allard's Memoir. The journey took them over six months, and we need not refer to it other than to question the statement made by Henry Lawrence that they were reduced to beg in the bazaars of Kabul and Peshawar, which is disproved by the news-writer's account of their arrival and the fact that they were able to display a quantity of gold coins to Ranjit Singh's courtiers, as proof of their indifference to his service. Lawrence† also states that they " acted as callers to prayers in the Peshawar Mosque"—a remark that needs no further comment than that the muezzin's

* Travels in Kashmir, etc., page 356.

† Lawrence: Adventurers in the Punjab.

profession is usually hereditary, and in any case requires special training.

Having traced their passage up to the 10th March, 1822, when they arrived at the great Serai attached to Jahangir's tomb in Shahdara, some three miles from Lahore, we will continue the narrative with the news-writer's reports, which are sufficiently vivid and full :—

* "*Lahore Akhbar, 12th March, 1822.*—" Yesterday the Maharajah sent me a purwannah, intimating that two Feringhees, one a gentleman, and the other a Gorah (white soldier) with several servants had arrived from the westwards *viâ* Kabul and Ramnagar at Shah Derrah opposite Lahore. I (the news-writer) answered that with the exception of Mr. Moorcroft, I have no intelligence of any of these gentlemen.

" I sent Mohan Lal to Shah Derrah to procure some other particulars. The two gentlemen speak Persian, and either French or English. They have arrived from Persia, *viâ* Kabul, for pleasure and information, and intend to remain in Lahore two or three months. They enquired after Mr. Moorcroft (an English traveller of the period) and asked if he went with an armed force. Mohan Lal answered in the negative, and said that Mr Moorcroft was on a trading excursion. They enquired how far Delhi might be, and were told 225 kos.

" *March 16th, 1822*†.—The Maharajah ordered pleased with Sahib Singh, the head *harkarrah*, for not giving information of these gentlemen when they reached his boundary, and that their arrival might have been prevented., The *harkarrah* replied that he did not know. These Feringhees have asked for a house at Lahore, or, if not granted, they will remain where they are at Shah Derrah."

" *March 16th, 1822*†.—The Maharajah ordered Munshi Sundha Ram to call Messrs. Ullur and Wuntoors (Allard and Ventura) the two French gentlemen. They came and presented a *nuzzur* of Rs. 100. The Maharajah told Ram Dass, the interpreter, that the gentlemen do not

* *Lahore Akhbar.*

† Punjab Records, Book No. 93, letters Nos. 46 and 106.

speak Hindi. The Maharajah, sitting on a carpet, requested the gentlemen to be seated, enquired after their health, from whence they had come, and their future views. They replied: ‘ We are Frenchmen, and have come *viâ* Roum (Constantinople), Baghdad, Persia, Candahar, Kabul, Peshawar, and Attock to Lahore.’ The Maharajah asked if they were well versed in the art of manœuvring an army. They answered in the affirmative, that their business was war and that they were soldiers.

“ The Maharajah then said, ‘if I entrust my artillery and battalions to you to invade Khorasan, could you perform such a service?’ They rejoined, ‘ Yes ’, but that the hot season had set in, which was very detrimental to Europeans. The Maharajah then asked them to fire one of his guns. They answered, ‘ We are not *golandauz* (gunners), but had gunners under us to fire guns under our direction.’ The Maharajah then said that the Sikhs are very expert on horseback, firing their musketry twenty times in one *sant* (two hours) and asked if they, the Frenchmen, were as expert on horseback. They replied, ‘ We use the sword and pistol on horseback, and dismounted can fire 300 rounds in one *sant*.’

“ The Maharajah again enquired if they (the Frenchmen) were better versed in the art of war than the English. They answered that the English in expertness and skill in war are equalled by none. The Maharajah then asked them if it was their pleasure to stay with him or to go. They answered that they were not desirous of service; they wished to pass the hot season in Lahore, and would then proceed where their *nasib* (fortune) would lead them in Hindustan.

“ In the afternoon the Maharajah directed them to instruct one of his battalions in the European manner. They replied: ‘ What your battalions have learnt, they have learnt. We are not enabled to teach them, as a shawl once woven cannot be woven in another fashion. If the Maharajah will give us recruits, we can teach them our exercise, and until we complete a battalion and please the Maharajah with the sight of a real parade and exercise, we cannot, and will not, accept anything. When the Maharajah shall have seen and approved of our work then he can fix a salary for us.’ The Maharajah remarked to

me that they appeared, from their manners and conversation, to be men of rank and consequence.''

The Frenchmen's comments on the difficulty of inducing men drilled or trained under one particular system to become proficient in another are quite correct. The soldier who has been trained on one particular system is very conservative in adopting another.

" They required high salaries, ten gold mohurs each per diem, independent of the keep of their horses and servants. The Maharajah remained silent. In the afternoon the Maharajah ordered Dhaunkal Singh's battalions, consisting half of Sikhs, and half of Poorbiahs, to parade, and calling for the French, asked them how the armies of the Persians and Durranis were in point of quality. They answered that the Durranis were better soldiers than the Persians, but that the former wanted unanimity, and whatever is performed in this world was by means of unanimity, and arrangement. The Maharajah again asked: 'Do my battalions manœuvre in the manner of the English?'

" They said, 'for the country, the battalions of the Sikhs are good in comparison!'

" The Maharajah then said: 'My army is more warlike and powerful than the English.'

" The parade continued till close of day.''

" *Lahore Akhbar, April 28th, 1822.*—I (the newswriter) went to the Durbar and presented a *nuzzur* on the Nauroz. The Maharajah mentioned the French officers and asked me if I had learned who they were from Captain Murray.' I replied in the negative, when the Maharajah was pleased to relate to me that they had represented themselves to be Frenchmen and companions (*musahib*) of Bonaparte, King of the French. officers of the second rank (colonel) and that they had received 50 gold mohurs each per diem.

" When Bonaparte was defeated, they came to Roum (Constantinople), Persia, and Kabul, and from thence in the capacity of merchants to Lahore. The Maharajah said. 'I offered them 10 rupees per diem, but they agreed not,' saying, 'we received 50 gold mohurs per diem under

Bonaparte. If you give us ten gold mohurs per day it will suffice, and if you will merely wish us to receive some for current expenses, that we need not ' and they showed many gold bootkees (small coins worth about Rs. 5) in their trunks to prove the truth of their not being in want of cash.

Such interviews and examinations continued without any definite result for some time, until, probably instigated by the Maharajah's confidant, the two addressed the following letter in French to him. The reason was to obtain some document to send to the British Agent at Ludhiana, to ascertain his opinion as to whether the men were actually Frenchmen, or to show him that, if they were really British spies, they were at least suspected :—

" 1st April, 1822.*

TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF LAHORE.

SIRE,

The favours showered on us by Your Majesty since our arrival at this capital are innumerable, and correspond to the high idea we have formed of Your Benevolence. Everything about Your Majesty is great, and worthy of a Sovereign who aspires to immortality. Sire, when we first had the honour of being presented to Your Majesty we disclosed to You the motive of our journey. The reply vouchsafed to us sets us at ease, but leaves us uncertain of our future.

....................We have therefore at the advice of Fakir Nur-ud-Din renewed our request in the French language, which we have been given to understand is familiar to one of your court.........We again supplicate Your Majesty to be good enough to give definite orders, which we shall always follow with the utmost respect and obedience.

We have the honour to be, with the deepest respect, the very humble, very obedient, and very devoted servants of Your Majesty.

CH. VENTURA. CH. ALLARD."

* Prinsep: Rise of Sikh Power, page 132.

This letter in original was sent on to Delhi. The remark about the person attached to the Lahore Durbar who understood French is obviously incorrect, for had there been one, he would have long before been produced. Whilst awaiting a reply from Delhi the Maharajah put the two to still further tests, regarding their *bonâ-fides* and military knowledge. What now follows is both amusing and interesting, the latter as it affords an illustration of the Maharajah's mentality, which occasionally displayed an almost infantile cunning.*

" *Lahore Akhbar, 5th & 6th May, 1822.*—The Maharajah directed Mohan Lal, Poorbiah, and other trustworthy persons by every means in their power to ascertain whether the two gentlemen were French or English. Mohan Lal could only obtain from them that they were French officers, but the Maharajah, having doubts in his mind and conceiving them to be English, ordered the European, James Sahib Junior, to pen a letter as from Mr. Moorcroft to the two Frenchmen, and having torn the seal from the cover of one of Mr. Moorcroft's old letters to the Maharajah, he affixed it on the feigned letter and sent it by a *harkarrah* to the two European gentlemen.

The contents of this letter were to the effect that Mr. Moorcroft was very glad to hear that they had arrived safely at Lahore, that he was in Ladakh, and begged to know their future, and what business brought them there. Everything being explained to the *harkarrah*, a Kashmiri, he was sent to the Frenchmen. Looking at the letter and viewing the *harkarrah*, the gentlemen said: 'We are not children that you should play with us.' The *harkarrah* said that he had brought the letter for them from Ladakh, and begged that they would be pleased to peruse it, and give an answer that he might return. They answered: 'We are not known to Moorcroft; we are not of his country, and have no correspondence with him, besides being not personally acquainted with him.' They returned the letter as received, with a message that a man had brought it from Ladakh, and it was perhaps for the Maharajah, as they could not read the superscription."

* Punjab Records, Book No. 94, letter No. 55.

Of all the cameos that these old letters present to us none are so clear cut as this! It represents the Maharajah's true mentality, as a blend of intense suspicion, and wily cunning, tempered by an almost infantile simplicity in matters outside his own experiences. Picture this absolutely despotic monarch, on whose finger tips hung the lives and limbs of his subjects, sitting down with a disreputable European deserter, to concoct a scheme to entrap these sophisticated Europeans, who for years had been associated with treacherous Asiatic races, and perhaps had often preserved their lives by their ability to detect deceit and stratagem.

Within the Maharajah's great tent, sumptuously lined with Kashmir shawls, and floored with costly carpets, sits the European, "James Sahib Junior," laboriously scribing an epistle, which he translates word by word to the Maharajah, who, as he understands, nods approval or suggests an alteration. Imagine Ranjit Singh's wickedly humorous face lighting up with malicious and self-applauding glee as he suggests what he considers the master stroke of attaching Moorcroft's old seal to the letter. Now picture the Frenchmen receiving the letter and imagine their barely veiled contempt at the transparent device, and the biting scorn with which they answer the *harkarrah's* plea for a *jawab* (answer). "Are we children, that you thus play with us?" and the emphatic and categorical denial of all knowledge of Moorcroft, and his concerns, either with or for them.

It is a richly humorous episode, completed by the chagrined faces of the Maharajah and the "European, James Sahib Junior," as they and their confederates watch from afar off the Kashmiri detected and scorned.

The next letter shows all doubts removed by the receipt of the intimation from Delhi that the men were really Frenchmen, and henceforth the adventurers bask in the sunshine of the Maharajah's favour.*

* Punjab Records, Book No. 93, letter No. 62.

"*Lahore Akhbar, 17th & 18th May, 1822.*—A long conversation upon commonplace topics took place between the French officers, Messrs. Uloor and Wuntoora. The Maharajah informed them that Mr. Ross had treated his *vakil* (carrying the letter) with great kindness. The Maharajah begged the French officers to be of good cheer, and he would soon find employment for them, and 500 horsemen were ordered from the camp of Dewan Misur Chand, to be placed with Messrs. Allar and Wuntoora for the purpose of teaching them the European exercises."

*"*Lahore Akhbar, 21st & 23rd May, 1822.*—The Maharajah informed the French officers that the battalion of Shaikh Basowan composed of Sikhs and Poorbiahs, with muskets and flints, should be placed under their charge for instruction, and the Shaikh should be ordered to obey the European officers. The Maharajah sent Mr. Allar to inspect the horse artillery, and Mr. Ventura to inspect the battalion of Shaikh Basowan. The battalion guns and two companies of Poorbiahs formed into a square and fired for two *ghurrees* (forty minutes) and the Maharajah viewed them on horseback, galloping from flank to flank.

"The two French officers came up when the Maharajah asked them what they thought of the exercise, and they said it was well done. The Maharajah told them to exercise the *golandauz* (gunners) in their own way, and Shaikh Basawan was directed to attend the French officers' tent and learn the words of command. The Maharajah said: 'I want to send my battalions, cavalry and artillery, with you (Allard and Ventura) first to settle Peshawar and then to take Kabul and Kandahar.' They answered that the Maharajah had many Sirdars of merit and wisdom, and it might be proper to employ them on such a service; they, however, were willing to perform with all their heart and soul whatever may be ordered.

"The Maharajah told them that in a short time 500 horse would arrive, and with several battalions and guns be entrusted to their guidance. The Maharajah's mind seems to lean completely to these gentlemen, and the native commandants are consequently much hurt, and often declare that he (the Maharajah) having seen the European

* Punjab Records, Book No. 93, letter No. 55.

manner of manœuvring, *how can be approve of our ways?* They endeavoured to persuade the Maharajah that Allard and Ventura were English, having seen them in Hindustan with the English Army.

" In the evening, Shaikh Basowan and his Munshi waited upon the French officers, when the latter explained the words of command to the Munshi, who wrote them in Persian. This morning the battalions were out at exercise with blank cartridges, the Maharajah, Messrs. Allard and Ventura being present. The Maharajah directed the Munshi to read the French words of command which he had written down. He failed, not being able to explain one single word. The Maharajah was much displeased, and turning to the Frenchmen, begged they would learn Hindustani or Punjabi in order that ' I may converse with you in private.' They replied that they would commence. They always attended the Durbar."

"*Lahore Akhbar, 26th & 28th May, 1822.**—The Maharajah told the French officers he would call another 15,000 to 20,000 horse, lately belonging to Halkur (Holkar) and form another camp of them. They replied : ' God's grace be upon the Maharajah, and whatever he said came to pass, and the counsel was good.' The Maharajah said he wished to take Kabul after the rainy season. They said the way from Kabul to Kandahar was open, and no Afghan army could stand against the army of the Maharajah. In fact, the country would fall without a battle. The Maharajah told them to be of good cheer, he would put a camp under their charge. The Maharajah sent Rs. 600 to their tent and told them he had sent to Ludhiana for 100 bottles of liquor for their use." (Champagne or beer?)

" *Lahore Akhbar, 28th May, 1822.*—The Maharajah, calling the French officers said : ' My *sipahees* tell me the French exercises are just the same as they have learnt, and if they are put under you will even forget what they have learned.' They replied, ' We have said before and we repeat, " Give us raw soldiers." ' The Maharajah said, ' It shall be so ' and praised the native commandants and their exercises. The officers said that the Maharajah had never seen French or English exercises properly done, and

* Punjab Records, Book No. 93, letter No. 64.

that he would be pleased with their own. ' These native commandants, poor things, they play like children.' The Maharajah replied, ' They did well enough to strike terror into the Afghans.' "

The next letter introduces two more of the lower class of Europeans employed by Ranjit Singh, both of whom we have already met.

" *Lahore Akhbar, 16th-17th July, 1822*.*—Rs. 700 were sent to the French officers and two regiments of Hindustani horse were placed under their orders. The exceeding favour of the Maharajah is upon them. The Maharajah told them that another *campo* (brigade) would be placed under them. ... The Maharajah told Mohan Lal to call both French officers and their companies. Messrs. Allard and Ventura accordingly arrived with four companies each, consisting of Sikhs, one hundred to each company. They were furnished with seven rounds of cartridges each, and went through their exercises. The Maharajah, in company with his native commandants, reviewed the parade and was much pleased with it, declaring that the eulogiums he had heard passed on the French manner of exercising troops were fully justified.

" The Maharajah was pleased beyond measure and directed them to consider his house as their own, and that a separate *campo*, independent of the two regiments of horse and composed entirely of recruits, would be formed for them. Orders were given to Nur-ud-Din to place 500 men in place of every 100 employed in fortifications (new cantonments and quarters). The Maharajah presented Mr. Carron (Gordon) who teaches the English exercises to the volunteer companies (recruits) with a horse, and to Mr. James, who instructs the artillery details, he gave a pair of gold bracelets as a reward for their services.

" After the parade a long conference took place between the French officers and the Maharajah, and on their taking leave, the Maharajah also sent them Rs. 600 to be distributed amongst the Sikhs, to whom they were teaching their exercises, who would then go through their parades with more ardour. He has ordered five battalions to be raised immediately and exercised. The officers of

* Punjab Records, Book No. 93, letter No. 104.

Ranjit's Court pay great attention to them, and bring presents." (Apparently they recognised which way the wind was blowing.)

Having seen the two friends through their vicissitudes, and on the fair way to fortune, we shall for the future deal with the career of Ventura alone. The favour shown, after the clouds of suspicion had blown away, continued, for, by 1824*, the Francese Campo or the Fauj-i-Khas (Royal Brigade) had increased to four battalions of infantry under Ventura, added to which were the two cavalry regiments under Allard and a brigade (battery) of artillery under a Mussulman commander, consisting of 24 guns of various calibre.

Yet, though always enjoying the Royal favour and confidence, Ventura seems never to have been admitted to the friendship, or even familiarity, extended to Allard and Avitabile, for to judge by several mentions, he was rather a reserved and gentlemanly person of refined manners, whereas the others were rough rankers, of manners and tastes probably more suitable to the atmosphere of the Sikh Court.

His commencing salary of Rs. 500 per month had, by the year 1826, increased to Rs. 3,000, and as from time to time jaghirs bringing in a total income of about Rs. 800 per month were added to this, his income was quite considerable. But whether he was ever fully paid up is problematical, for all of Ranjit's employés, no matter what their rank, were always in arrears, Jacquemont mentioning that in 1836 Ventura was due no less than Rs. 150,000, or over two years' pay!

In 1825 Ventura was† married at Ludhiana to an Armenian lady of mixed descent, whose father was a Frenchman in the service of Begum Sumru, her sister being later the wife of Walter Dubuignon, Commander of the Begum's personal guard. The marriage was said to

* Khalsa Durbar Records, page 16, Volume I.

† History of the Punjab, page 439.

have been celebrated by a Catholic priest from Lucknow, but unfortunately a reference to the Catholic authorities at that place only elicited the reply that the marriage does not appear in their registers. Probably the officiating priest was a missionary, and did not trouble to send in a copy of the certificate.

According to Mahomed Latif*, the wedding presents given by the Maharajah and the Sirdars amounted to fully Rs. 40,000, which is probably correct, for after the first enmity had worn off, Ventura was always popular with the courtiers. Though Madame Ventura lived with her husband for some ten years, and bore him a daughter, her married life does not seem to have been happy, for even after marriage, Ventura kept up his zenana at Lahore, and there are certain anecdotes extant regarding his infidelities, which show that she had ample cause for leaving him.

After their separation, Madame Ventura resided permanently at Ludhiana, where she died in extreme poverty in 1870, the income left her by Ventura having ceased with his death, after which she existed on a small pension from the British Government. Of her personal appearance, Mrs. Mackenzie thus writes :—

†"Madame Ventura is a very handsome Armenian, very little darker than a Spaniard. She is a Catholic, but apparently a convert, as she is rather vague about the Catholic observances." Ventura's daughter went with him to France to be educated in 1837, and never returned to India. Ultimately she married a French nobleman and descendants still exist, as only a few years ago they addressed the Punjab Government on the subject of the immense treasures Ventura was supposed to have left behind him when he quitted the Punjab.

The first engagement of the newly raised Francese Campo was at the Battle of Nowshera in 1823, and here

* History of the Punjab, page 433.

† Life in Mission, Camp and Zenana, page 87.

he had command of the flanking attack, which turned the scale in favour of the Maharajah, after the latter's impetuous frontal attack had failed. After the battle Ventura's Brigade formed part of the force occupying Peshawar, until the fine or indemnity was paid up by the Afghans. From Peshawar the Campo went on to the Kangra Valley and other places, collecting long overdue tribute, probably with interest, and returning through the Derajat on a similar errand, was stationed at Lahore for a short time.

The next enterprise was the siege of Kotla, a great hill fort at the entrance to the Kangra Valley, which, though it had before resisted all attacks, was now forced to surrender by the simple expedient, suggested by Ventura, of cutting off the river which ran by the foot of the hill, and supplied the garrison. This success, added to his ever-growing influence, so incensed the Sirdars, that on returning to Lahore, they mutinied, and incited the troops to follow their example. However, the revolt was brief, for Ranjit Singh brought down his own personal troops from the fort, and surrounding the mutineers at Anarkali, dismissed the principal malcontents, and fined others very heavily, probably rejoicing at the opportunity, fines being a favourite method of raising funds.

The next expedition was with Jemadar Khushal Singh to suppress a rebellion in the Gandgarh district, and from thence to take the hill fort of Srikot, strongly held by Pathans in revolt. Having done this they went on to Peshawar, and extracted a heavy fine from Yar Mahomed Khan, whom Ranjit Singh, probably with reason, suspected of having instigated the rebellion. A year later Ventura was again at Peshawar, this time being sent to take from the Afghan Governor a very famous horse named Laili, which Ranjit, almost a monomaniac on fine horses, desired by any means.

This time the attempt was unsuccessful, Ventura being put off with the excuse that the horse was dead.

However, he managed to secure it later on. Of this animal Ranjit Singh remarked to Captain Osborne, who saw it with him, that it had cost the lives of 12,000 men and six lakhs of rupees, which we may believe or not. It seems very much exaggerated.

At the request of Ranjit Singh, who was desirous of being treated by a European doctor for incipient paralysis, a Dr. Murray was deputed to Lahore, and from the reports sent in by this gentleman, we are able to quote some interesting particulars regarding the European adventurers in the service of the Maharajah at this date. Of Ventura he writes* :—

"*7th January, 1827.*—One of the battalions under command of M. Ventura having arrived from camp, the Raja sent for me in the afternoon. The battalion was drawn up in three ranks in open order, and consisted of about 700 men. They were all Punjabis of medium height, and looked very sepoy-like. They were dressed in red jackets made to fit, white trousers and yellow puggries, with black leather pouches. The battalion went through several manœuvres, which the men executed admirably, especially the advance in line. On the afternoon of the 5th the battalion was again drawn up for firing, which was done in a very superior style. In fact, I never saw it surpassed by any of our sepoy regiments.

†" Yesterday afternoon another of M. Ventura's battalions was drawn up. The men are mostly Gurkhas, and it is called in consequence the Goorkha Pultan. They were dressed in dark green jackets with red facings, and had shakos of a European pattern. In other respects they resembled the battalion I had seen the previous day, and did equally well."

Incidentally it is interesting to note that the uniform now worn by the Gurkhas in the British service was first adopted by Ventura to distinguish his own Gurkhas.

" *16th January, 1827.*‡—M. Ventura is a fine looking young man, about 33 years of age, very neat in his person

* Murray's letters, No. 68, Volume 1, Range 125.

† Murray's letters, No. 68, Volume 16, Range 125.

‡ Murray's letters, No. 13, Volume 18, Range 125.

and dress, and wearing his beard long. He conversed a good deal in French, and told me that it was at his pressing instance that the Maharajah consented to this interview, for a suspicion existed that I would try to exert some undue influence over him and his friend (Allard)............ He was much affected when I mentioned Beauharnais' death*, and said that he had served under him in the Russian Campaign. After some 15 minutes the Maharajah sent him away and then very earnestly asked me if I thought he was a Frenchman and a real gentleman. I replied that there was very little doubt that he was a gentleman, and so far as I could judge a Frenchman. He was very pleased at this, and said that some people said that he and his friend were not real Sahibs, but Gorahs, and not real Frenchmen either."

In 1828, the brigades of Ventura and Senor Oms were sent to Kangra under Sher Singh to add that territory, now vacant by the death of Sansar Chand, to the Punjab dominions. There was a certain amount of fighting due to the forts of Terah, Riah and Pulhar being held for Sansar Chand's son, and this having been overcome the brigades returned to Lahore. He next accompanied Sher Singh against Syed Ahmad Ghazi, a famous fanatic, who from a trooper in the Company's cavalry had now become a power on the frontier, and possessed a large following, with which he harassed Peshawar, and the adjacent districts. He was actually in possession of Peshawar, but evacuated it on the approach of Ranjit Singh's forces, and continued his depredations until 1832, when he was destroyed with his entire forces by Ventura and Sher Singh, at the Battle of Balakot in May, 1832.

In the same year the French traveller Jacquemont visited Lahore, and resided with Ventura for some months. He has left us some interesting notes concerning Ventura and the other adventurers in Ranjit Singh's services, to which we shall occasionally refer. About this time Ventura was sent to the Derajat to endeavour to recover some 2½ lakhs of rupees, due from the Nawab of Bahawal-

* Eugene de Beauharnais, d. 1824.

pur, who had farmed the district from Ranjit Singh. Failing to obtain any cash, Ventura realised about six lakhs from forced contributions, which so pleased the Maharajah that he made him Governor of the Derajat, the conditions being a revenue of 11½ lakhs per annum, and 300 cavalry remounts, the district being famed for horse-breeding.

Though the amount was many times more than that demanded from Bahawal Khan, Ventura managed to have it paid without inflicting any hardships upon the inhabitants, and also improved the town of Multan, as testified to by Alexander Burnes, who wrote in 1836 :—

*" The town of Multan has a prosperous appearance, which is altogether attributable to M. Ventura, who was until lately in charge of it. Under Bahawal Khan, the officers were guilty of the greatest extortion, but since 1832, when the Sikhs resumed it, the place has greatly recovered.

†Mahomed Latif adds : " Ranjit Singh had an eye on General Ventura, whom he suspected of making a great deal of money from his farm of the Derajat, but in consideration of his good services and his excellent management of the districts on the frontier, the Maharajah was prevented from indulging his cupidity against an officer who was honoured alike by the people, the officers and the Government."

The contrast between this honoured estimation and the dread inspired by Avitabile is great. Yet much of it may have been due to the difference between the Peshawari, or Khyberee, and the inhabitant of the Derajat. It is doubtful whether Ventura could ever have managed the Peshawar district by such means as he did the Derajat.

Probably it was this success that induced Ranjit Singh to offer Ventura the Government of Kashmir in place of Man Singh who, the Maharajah believed, was robbing him in the matter of revenue. There are several

* Cabool, page 182.

† History of the Punjab, page 465.

mentions of this incident in the records, but so vague that we shall quote the following from the Calcutta Journal of 1835 which is copied from a news-letter we have been unable to find, and runs :—

*" M. Ventura proposed a clear rent of 15 lakhs of rupees for Kashmir if Mehan Singh were recalled. The Durbar remarked that such a proceeding would be unjust as Mehan Singh had greatly improved the country." This closed Ventura's excursions into Civil Government although we find† Baron Hugel asserting that from 1835 to 1837 Ventura was Kazi, or Chief Judge of Lahore. There is absolutely nothing in the Punjab Records to support this statement, and we believe it to be incorrect, for so important an appointment given to a European would have certainly been notified to the British Government by the news-writer.

Nor do we find any proof of Hugel's assertion that Ventura was Commander-in-Chief of the Khalsa Army, for there never was one rather than the ruler himself. The mistake may have arisen from the fact that when, for the first time in 1836, Ranjit created some Generals he offended Ventura by placing some as senior to him, and when he protested the Maharajah presented him with a pair of magnificent pearl and gold embroidered epaulettes and assured him that he should rank senior to all‡. For some time after their arrival, Allard and Ventura dwelt in the old tomb of Anarkali, from which Ranjit Singh cleared out a Sikh Sirdar. This arrangement was only temporary, for as both married, and Ventura set up a zenana in addition, the dual occupation was inconvenient. On being approached, Ranjit Singh contributed liberally in cash and kind towards new residences, of which that built by Ventura still survives as the nucleus of the great offices of the Punjab Government.

* Calcutta Journal, 1835, page 407.

† Travels in Kashmir, page 317.

‡ Mackinnon's Military Services in Afghanistan, page 70.

Ventura retained the old tomb for his zenana, and it is said that during his absence for two years in France, the inmates never quitted the building. It is curious to think that this ancient tomb, built to keep green the memory and cover the bones of the cruelly murdered wife of Akbar, should successively become a powder magazine, the dwelling of a Sikh Sirdar, the home of two European adventurers, a zenana, a Christian church, and at the moment, the storehouse of the archives of the Sikh Government and its successor.

Of its appearance in Ventura's time we have several accounts. Baron Hugel writes (1839) :—

*" General Ventura's house, built by himself, though of no great size, combines the splendour of the East with the comforts of European residence. On the walls of the entrance hall, before the range of pillars on the first storey, was portrayed the reception of the two French officers by Ranjit Singh, consisting of many thousands of figures. The second room is adorned with a profusion of mirrors in gilt frames, which had an excellent effect. The third is a large hall extending the entire width of the apartments, and terminating in the sleeping apartments.

" At a short distance behind the tomb stands an ancient tomb crowned with a lofty dome (that of Anarkali). This is tenanted by the families of the European officers. Standing in the midst of the garden, which has been laid out with taste, it forms a striking contrast to the surrounding plain."

Barr, who visited the house ten years later, seems to have been more amused than impressed by the mural paintings :—

†" Adjoining the dining room is another one of some dimensions, lined from top to bottom with looking glasses, which must have a pretty effect when illuminated. We were subsequently shown into the painted chamber, which is illuminated with pictures of battles in which Ventura and Allard have been engaged, executed on the *chunam*

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* Travels in Kashmir, etc., pages 283-84.

† Barr: Journal of a March, etc., pages 78—79, 80.

(plaster) by native artists. The perspective of these scenes is most ridiculous. At the siege of Multan the guns are turned on end to allow the gunners to load them. The figures overtop the foundations. The cavalry are manœuvring in the air, and absurdities of a similar nature are perpetrated throughout them all, and no doubt afford much amusement to the gallant owners, whose policy has led them to assimilate their dwellings with those of the native population, for it can hardly be assumed that their taste is so vitiated as to regard them as ornamental."

In 1837 Ventura proceeded to Europe on two years' leave, and remained there until news of Ranjit Singh's critical condition and approaching demise induced him to hasten back to the Punjab. He arrived at Ludhiana to find orders awaiting him to proceed at once to Peshawar and assume command of the troops at that station, including the contingent provided by Ranjit Singh under the provisions of the tri-partite treaty—an agreement which bound the British, Ranjit Singh, and Shah Shujah to mutual assistance in the matter of placing Shah Shujah on the throne from which he had been evicted so many years before.

This duty was much disliked by the Khalsa troops, who would far more willingly have fought against the British, than with them, and knowing the critical condition of these troops, Captain Wade, who was in political charge of the contingent, specially asked for Ventura as the "only man exercising any control over the Sikh soldiers, and more to be depended upon than any European officer of Sikh service."

Of the actual condition of the Durbar troops, much is written in the Punjab Records and contemporary books, and from these we need quote but one instance, as showing how little they esteemed even Ventura himself:—

"*April, 1839.*—General Ventura arrived from Lahore by express. His intimate knowledge of the character and disposition of the different parties made his presence very valuable so long as he remained there. He is actively engaged in assembling the force to accompany us to Kabul.

He wished to accompany it himself, but will not be permitted. We had not been established many days at Koulsar, when the Gurkhas, which formed part of General Ventura's force, mutinied. He had been obliged to place their adjutant under arrest, and as he was a favourite with the men, they determined to release him by force.

" A large body proceeded to the quarter guard and demanded his release. This was refused by Ventura, who ordered his guard and the Ghorcharrahs to load, upon which the Gurkhas desisted, returned to camp, struck their tents, and with colours flying and band playing, marched out of camp, taking their two (battalion) guns with them. They proceeded to Peshawar, where they remained in a state of open mutiny, whilst a report of their conduct was sent to Lahore (which probably troubled them little)."

Barr adds personal details concerning Ventura, whom he describes as " a gentlemanly looking man, who bears a high character. He is rather haughty in his manner*."

However, his stay at Peshawar was cut short by the death of Ranjit Singh, which caused his recall to Lahore for the same reasons for which he had been sent to Peshawar, namely, his influence with the troops. He remained at Lahore, during the short reign of Kharak Singh, and his successor, but immediately after the death of Nau Nihal Singh, it was considered desirable that the troops at Lahore should be lessened in numbers, and accordingly Ventura was sent to undertake the subjection of the Kulu and Mandi districts.

Operations against these were undertaken in June and continued until December, with the result that 200 hill forts were taken, including the virgin stronghold of Kumlagarh, which was really a chain of fortified hills extending over twenty miles of country. For his services in this connection, Ventura was thanked by the Durbar, and granted a khillat of honour, in acknowledging which he describes the operations, mentioning that to discourage desertion amongst his troops he had cut off the noses and

* Barr: Journal of a March, etc., pages 294-95.

blackened the faces of some half dozen who had been recaptured.

Meanwhile, matters had moved at Lahore. The Rani Chand Kour, who had been proclaimed regent after Nau Nihal Singh's death, to the exclusion of Sher Singh, Ventura's old comrade, was highly unpopular with the troops, Sher Singh being the reverse. The latter retired to Batala, some 50 miles from Lahore, and thence commenced to intrigue with the troops and the principal officers, whose support he secured, with the results given in our appendix on Anarchy in the Punjab.

During these ghastly operations, Ventura, like other European officers, stood aside, but after the fort had been taken, used his influence to secure the undisturbed retreat of Raja Gulab Singh. As to his influence, the following, written by Henry Lawrence, will suffice * :—

"After the siege, Ventura, who had now joined, commenced the distribution of money to those in the rear, so as to divert their attention and attract their bloodthirsty, but greedy, companions from the Fort. By his coolness and tact, and by the influence he exerted over the soldiery, he seems at this time, and even more so during the next few days, to have saved many lives, especially those of General Court and General Teja Singh, now Governor of Peshawar. Ventura's own troops being in Mandi, his absence during the siege was less resented than that of Court, whose division suffered more than the others. Ventura was Sher Singh's right hand man and deserved the greatest credit for his conduct at this time. He patrolled the city, cajoled or bullied the troops, and gradually introduced some order."

But matters soon passed beyond the control of any individual, for the spirit of insubordination gradually increased to such an extent that he became convinced that the days of discipline and order had passed and the European officers become persons whose position was highly precarious. Besides this, Ventura had incurred the enmity of Gulab Singh, an ungrateful return for his

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* Calcutta Review, 1844, pages 486-88.

intervention after the surrender of the Fort, and taking all things into consideration, he decided to tender his resignation and quit the Punjab.

The resignation was not accepted by Sher Singh, who, however, permitted him to realise his personal effects in Lahore, after which Ventura took leave to proceed to Ludhiana and there sold all but his house (occupied by his wife), and jaghirs to the British Government, realising Rs. 80,000 from the sale of elephants, boats, horses, etc. He then returned to Lahore, probably in the hope of matters improving, but the assassination of Sher Singh on the 15th of September, 1843, extinguished such hopes as he might have had, and he finally quitted the Punjab.

He remained at Simla until October 1884, settling his affairs concerning the jaghirs, which were in Cis-Sutlej territory, and having induced the British Government to undertake the management of them, sailed for France in November, 1844. Before going he settled Rs. 250 per month from the jaghirs on Madame Ventura, and in addition Rs. 100 per month from an estate in Behar of which he was part owner.

Having lost much of his money in bad speculations in France, he decided to turn his Indian estates, or rather those of his daughter, and his house at Lahore, into ready cash, and with that view returned to the Punjab in 1848. As he had been very unguarded concerning the Punjab Government, or rather the Resident's, activities, whilst on a visit to London, and also communicated to the Sirdars by letter some incautious expressions regarding self-determination dropped in his presence by high persons in London, his appearance was viewed with suspicion. Consequently when he offered his services for the siege of Multan no answer was at first returned, and when, after he had pressed for one, a decided negative, together with an intimation that his presence at the moment was undesirable, was sent, he was much offended.

However, in the end he managed to settle his affairs, the British paying him a lump sum of £20,000, and an

annuity of £300 for his house and his daughter's jaghir.* He also obtained payment of Rs. 15,000 due as arrears by the Durbar, and with this returned to France where he died in Paris on the 3rd of April 1858. He was given the title of Count de Mandi after the campaign in the hills of 1841 and in France was generally known by that title.

In conclusion let us finally dispose of the legends current in France that these adventurers left huge sums behind them at Lahore. As regards Ventura, only last year† an application from his descendants was received in Lahore asking for an account of the large sums alleged to have been left by Madame Ventura, who actually died in poverty a pensioner of the British Government.

* Punjab Records, Ventura file No. 22/4/53.
† 1927.


Genl Avitabile
(Late Governor of Peshawar)

# CHAPTER VIII.

## PAOLO DI AVITABILE.

Of the many interesting personalities which a study of Ranjit Singh's European officers has revealed, none are more complex than that of this Neapolitan adventurer, who, commencing life as a private gunner of artillery, succeeded by ruthlessness, personality, and boundless energy, aided by undoubted merit, in obtaining high rank in two widely separated Asiatic armies, and governing with success before unattained, and since unsurpassed, some of the most ruffianly, desperate, and treacherous peoples in Asia, and in so doing amassing a great fortune, though by methods of the most dubious.

The inscription on his tomb at Agerola is an epitome of his career :—

LIEUT.-GENERAL PAOLO DI AVITABILE.

Born October 1791. Died 28th March, 1850.
Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. Of the order of Merit of San Ferdinand of Naples. Of the Durrani Order of Afghanistan. Grand Cordon of the Lion and the Sun, and of the Two Lions and Crown of Persia. Of the Auspicious Order of the Punjab.

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Naples, First Lieutenant. Persia, Colonel.
France and the Punjab, General and Governor of Peshawar.

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*A man of matchless honour and glory*.*

Truly an imposing row of decorations? Certainly, five of the six were mere tinsel and glass, which did not survive their creators, though such as they were, they marked appreciation as well as the more ancient and stately orders of European chivalry. Even now, many

* Cotton's Life, page 585.

a prince or soldier, who bears a cuirass of parti-coloured ribbons, may number amongst them some decorations almost as tawdry, though wearing them as proudly as perhaps Avitabile did his mushroom ones.

*A man of matchless honour and glory*! Well, of the dead speak nothing but good is a charitable saying, but "the evil that men do lives after them," is another as weighty, and Avitabile's moral delinquencies and fiendish cruelties are even now remembered in the districts he once governed, by legends or grim stories, some of which we dare not publish.

But, if his nature was cruel, and his morals worse, both were well suited to the men he dealt with, and explained the success he met with in ruling them, for with such men, such qualities commanded obedience and admiration. We have spoken of the complexity of his nature, which, as shown by the many who knew him intimately, or dwelt with him at various times, is truly bewildering. Let us quote Henry Lawrence, who knew Avitabile very well* :—

"I have eaten Avitabile's salt, and may not speak too harshly of him......Strangely influencing others, and influenced by them, Avitabile's history is a curious one, which, when his own generation has passed away, will scarcely be believed by others."

Let us summarise the opinions of Havelock, Burnes, Mackinnon, Mackenzie, Edwardes, and Durand, all men who had either intimate acquaintance or more than passing knowledge of the man. In his favour it is said—

"The mildest of men, frank, gay, and good-humoured, scrupulously just to the peasant and small trader, a skilful and considerate officer, an active and impartial judge, a sober, strong, and resolute man, and a perfect Solomon of judgment."

Now the reverse :—

"A perfect monster of cruelty, who has added European refinements of torture and execution to the

* Adventurers in the Punjab, page 274.

already long Asiatic list; passionate and revengeful; unscrupulous in gratifying his lusts; rapacious in extorting unlawful gains; hanging, torturing and mutilating without trial, at a mere whim; unmerciful and unforgiving; an immoderate drinker and a scoffer at everything sacred and divine."

It is a formidable and contradictory list, yet strangely enough there is justification for every item of praise or censure. For all the cruelties alleged against him, there is written authority, and we could quote many others, still legendary, but they are too gruesome or unsavoury for perpetuation, and quite enough is officially recorded to suit the taste of the most morbid of readers.

In judging Avitabile's character, the reader must judge for himself, bearing in mind Avitabile's nationality, always an impulsive and blood-reckless one; his peculiar training in Persia, and the mentality and habits of the men, both Punjabi and Afghan with whom he served, ruled over, or dealt with. It may be, that, as Honigberger remarked, Avitabile's excesses had effected his brain, though of this the reader may form his own judgment. No strong ruler is without faults, for if he were, he would be neither strong nor successful.

Paolo di Avitabile was born at Agerola in October, 1791, the fifth child of a family of eight, and at the age of 16 was drawn for the Neapolitan militia, in which he served for three years, before joining the artillery of the regular army of Joachim Murat, then King of Naples, subject to Napoleon Bonaparte. He served in the artillery for five years, attaining the rank of sergeant-major, and it is recorded that his career was creditable in so far that he was awarded a special medal for efficiency.

In March, 1815, he was given a commission as second lieutenant, on the outbreak of war between Murat and Austria, but saw no fighting in that campaign, his battery being detained on garrison duty. After Murat had been

defeated, and had fled, Avitabile in the easy manner of most soldiers of the time, serving kingdoms whose destinies were in the melting pot, transferred his allegiance to the Bourbons. and was made first lieutenant. He then served at the Siege of Gaeta, a town in which some of Murat's adherents still held out, and distinguished himself for bravery, for though severely wounded, he refused to quit his battery until peremptorily ordered to do so. His soldierly qualities attracted special commendation, and served him so well that when the army was reduced, Avitabile was retained on half-pay in the local militia.

Here he spent some time in poverty, for the miserable stipend was insufficient for even an Italian, and as Avitabile was essentially " a red blooded man," he soon tired of such an ignoble existence, which held forth no prospects of betterment. Accordingly, he resigned the service of neither honour nor comfort in January, 1817, abandoning, he thought, for ever, a military career of poverty for a civil one offering the chances of a decent existence. But this abandonment, though he knew it not then, was but temporary, for to quote his favourite proverb, *Alla Kerimast* (God is benevolent) and Avitabile's fate had been written by his hand as that of a soldier of fortune in strange lands.

Meanwhile, he took up employment as the supercargo of a small Spanish trader in which, after visiting many Mediterranean ports, he eventually arrived in Algiers where a chance speculation promised to turn out profitably. But unfortunately, an outbreak of plague compelled the vessel to leave before the project came to fruition, and ill fortune still further pursued them, until the vessel was wrecked off the mouth of the Rhone. Even now his cup of misfortune was not full, for on it being found that the survivors had come from a plague-stricken country, they were placed in quarantine at the Chateau D'If.

Eventually released without money or employment, Avitabile suffered considerable distress until he found a helping hand from some French officers, who had been disbanded from the Bonapartist army, and to whom Marseilles served as a port of exit or entry from the various parts of the world to which they had scattered in search of military employment. One of these men had just returned from service in Persia, and his description of the prospects awaiting capable military men, with no scruples, in the East, convinced the young Neapolitan that there lay his destiny.

Casting aside all thoughts of a sordid commercial career, the more easily as it had failed him, he decided to attempt to resume his early trade in an Eastern clime. and under a foreign flag. It should be remembered that some of the most successful adventurers of the late 18th century, such as Bourquin, Perron, L'Estineau and De Boigne were still living in France, and the glamour of their success fired the imagination and induced a spirit of emulation amongst needy and adventurous *ex*-Bonapartist officers.

Avitabile secured a recommendation to the Persian envoy at Constantinople, and was by him accepted and despatched to Teheran. At this period, the armed forces of the Persian kingdom were divided into two groups, one trained by Englishmen, and the other by Continental adventurers. This peculiar position arose through the action of Fateh Ali Shah, who, in accordance with his right of nomination, had chosen from amongst his numerous sons Abbas Mirza. All but Mahomed Ali Mirza, who was the eldest, acquiesced in the choice, but he, announcing his intention of disputing the succession by force of arms, withdrew to his governorship at Kermanshah, and there raised and trained an army.

Once again the age-old rivalry between the English and French in the armies of Asiatic princes arose, for Abbas Mirza secured a number of officers and N. C. O.'s

from the army in India, whilst his rival brother engaged continental adventurers. Amongst these, Avitabile soon became prominent and was appointed to discipline and train a batch of Kurdish levies, the most savage and intractable of all the Persian mountaineers. But, he was fully equal to the task, and did so well that when Mahomed Ali was killed in an abortive attack on Baghdad. Abbas Mirza took Avitabile and his command into his own service. Besides this, he gave him civil control of the Kurdish districts, from which he achieved the heretofore impossible task of extracting taxes.

It was here that he first practised that system of ruling by fear, ruthless torture, and wholesale execution, which, later applied to the border ruffians of Peshawar and the Khyber, made his administration feared and obeyed. Such methods (when applied to others) gained the admiration of the Sikhs, who despised Ranjit Singh for that humanity, which, though ruthlessly maiming, stopped at death. That Avitabile understood the mentality of savage Asiatics is shown by the fact that his personal guard at Peshawar was composed of men whose relatives he had tortured and hanged by the score, or hundred, and that when his Sikh soldiers mutinied, the tribesmen, whose sons, brothers and fathers adorned the gallows of Peshawar, swarmed to his aid.

His service in Persia was rewarded with the rank of Colonel and two Persian decorations. But after six years, seeing no prospects, all the important posts being held by English officers, and being homesick, a curious complaint for a man so apparently callous and devoid of feeling, Avitabile resigned and returned to Naples. Here he was very well received by the King and Queen, as much on account of the costly presents he had brought, as of the reputation which had preceded him.

But if he cherished ideas of suitable military employment, he was soon disillusioned, for all that he received was a trumpery decoration. Besides the deadly mono-

tony of a village home and its circumscribed orbit, soon disgusted one who had travelled far and exercised power and command beyond what he had ever dreamed of. So Avitabile decided to return to the East. Baron Hugel remarks :—

*" Avitabile was an Italian who had served some years in Persia. A longing after his native home induced him to revisit it, but he soon found it so distasteful that he quitted it, and returning to the East again, entered the service of an independent Prince."

Having heard of Ventura's success, Avitabile wrote requesting his good offices, which were so exercised, that Ranjit Singh promised employment conditional on the candidate presenting himself at Lahore and proving satisfactory. He was advised to follow the same route and travel in the same fashion as his predecessors had done; such a mode of progress being cheap and unobtrusive. Whether Ventura advanced him the money does not appear, but he certainly sent funds and a guide to await Avitabile at Herat. Mr. Cotton, who has written a life of Avitabile, states that the diary of this journey still exists at Agerola, and that the merchandise carried to have been cheap jewellery, watches, musical boxes, and improper pictures.

It does not appear whether Court accompanied him from Europe, but as the latter's itinerary commences at Yezd, we may presume that the two joined forces there. The improper pictures must have been the contribution of Avitabile, for all accounts agree that whilst Court was a person of strict morality, and refined manners, Avitabile was emphatically destitute of both; the presumption is that Court had nothing to do with them. In Court's Diary will be found the full account of their journey to Kabul, and we shall take up our story at that place.

On the 25th December, 1826, the newswriter at Lahore reports that† "two French officers are at Kabul, and

* Hugel's Travels in Kashmir, page 317.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 73, letter No. 270.

on their way to Lahore. The officers are men of rank, one being a Colonel, and both are numerously attended."

Presumably the funds for this show of prosperity had been advanced by Ventura, who knew that the prospects of the newcomers would be greatly helped by an appearance of rank and importance. As usual, Ranjit Singh kept them waiting several months, for it was not until April that the two were taken into service. Avitabile was allotted a battalion of infantry on a pay of Rs. 700 per month, which a year later had attained to Rs. 1,200, and to cut matters short, we may add that his military salary culminated in Rs. 60,000 per annum.

Curiously enough, though an artilleryman, he had nothing whatever to do with the artillery. He remained in military employment until 1830, his cantonment being situated at Naulakha, about two miles north-east of Lahore, and adjoining that of Court. Overlooking his camp stood an immense Gibraltar-shaped mound, some 400 yards long and about 300 feet high at the extreme end, called the Budh-ka-Awa, and composed of the debris of countless years of brick burning.

On the apex of this mound, which dominated the surrounding country and the roads leading into Lahore, Avitabile built himself a small but very strong fort-like dwelling, which Masson records was very grotesquely painted. Later this house became the meeting place of the panches, and the centre in which the plots of the Punjab Anarchy were hatched and started. As with the other brigades, that of Avitabile was, in addition to active service, often employed in collecting revenue from defaulting districts, and ousting persons whose jaghirs the Maharajah wished to resume or confiscate.

We find Sohan Lal recording that Avitabile was directed to confiscate the estate of the jaghirdars of Jesrota (the Dograhs) during the absence of the owners, whom the wily Maharajah had called to court, out of the way. This

unpleasant duty being likely to embroil him with powerfull persons, Avitabile evaded it, by sending a message that as the jaghirdars were at court, the Maharajah should personally acquaint them with the orders given by him. We may remark that the estates were *not* confiscated.

In December, 1829, Avitabile was appointed Governor of Wazirabad, and from henceforth always added a civil governorship to the command of his military brigade. As to his qualifications for civil government, Herbert Edwardes records :—

*" Avitabile, though professionally a soldier, had all the genius for civil government of a Thomas Munro or Henry Lawrence, though entirely destitute of their philanthropy and Christian springs of action. With the intrigue and cunning of an Asiatic, the broader wisdom and self-reliance of a European, and the remorselessness of one who openly professed to have no God, Avitabile, backed by a powerful Sikh force, was soon master of the Peshawar valley, and to this day (1872) is spoken of by the Afghans with the admiration of a troop of jackals for a tiger. He stuck at nothing that would serve his ends......More than once has the author (Edwardes) heard citizens of Peshawar tell how a follower, who had insulted some inmate of the General's harem, was forthwith ordered to be hurled from the top of a minaret.

" The wretch was so hurled, but half way over, caught hold of a projecting cornice, and thense screamed aloud to Avitabile to have mercy for the love of God. Avitabile, unmoved, replied, ' God may have mercy on you if he likes, but I will have none. Throw him off the ledge !' "

†Lawrence corroborates this version, adding that the man was induced to quit his hold by a forged pardon being shown to him, and on trusting himself within reach of the guards, was cast down. But another version was told to us many years ago, which placed the scene at

* Life of Henry Lawrence, pages 292-294.

† Adventurers in the Punjab, page 69.

Wazirabad, and the offenders as two men who had interfered with a village maiden who had captured Avitabile's fancy. She acquainted Avitabile with the facts, whereupon one man was thrown from the tower and the other sown up in a raw bull hide and exposed to the sun. A terrible torture, for the hide slowly contracting as it dried, crushed him to death.

We learn from Sohan Lal that Avitabile ranked second amongst the civil governors, he of Kangra being the first. The instructions given to him, together with a *khillat* of investment, consisting of eleven large pieces of silk, four Kashmir shawls, and a pair of gold bracelets, ran :—

"You are to take especial care of all persons and property that are now committed to your charge; to see that the poor and decrepit are well cared for, and you are also to furnish regularly a detailed report of all the land under your charge and the revenues and other sums collected by you*."

From the fact that master and man were always very friendly it is evident that they were similar in many respects. Both were utterly devoid of morals, rapacious and unscrupulous, differing only in the manner of attaining their ends, for whereas Avitabile preferred direct force, torture, and multiple executions, Ranjit Singh practiced dissimulation, cunning, treachery and mutilation, resorting only to force when all else had failed.

It is possible that Avitabile had narrated his experiences in methods of governing to his new employer, and that his experience with the Kurds impressed Ranjit Singh with a conviction that in Avitabile was a man capable of effectually ruling those turbulent districts and extracting a quota of revenue from them.

As to Avitabile's administrative methods and their success, much is to be found in both the Punjab Records and the books of contemporary writers, all of which go to

* Sohan Lal's Diary.

show that though savagely cruel to criminals, his rule was otherwise just and able. Reynell Taylor, one of the officers deputed by the British Government to settle the Punjab, between the two wars, records that since Avitabile had left the place, Wazirabad had greatly decayed, and the shopkeepers regret sincerely the days of Avitabile's "wise and vigorous management."

*" Avitabile hanged for theft and it was unknown in his time, which the inhabitants speak of as one of great security. Herbert Edwardes, also commends the system introduced by Avitabile when Governor of Wazirabad—introducing books in every village, "to prevent extortion on the part of the Kardar (Governor) himself, or any of his officials, wherein the instalments paid were entered up and signed by both parties at the time of payment. These books were afterwards reviewed once or twice a year at Lahore."

This latter remark disposes of the assertion that Avitabile made his money by either robbing Ranjit Singh or the ryot. How he became wealthy will appear later, but even then it should be remembered that his legitimate salary was Rs. 60,000 a year, added to which were jaghirs and bonuses on revenue amounting to probably half as much more.

A personal glimpse of Avitabile is given by Wolff, who visited the Punjab in 1832.

†" Wolff took up his abode with the famous General Avitabile, a Neapolitan by birth, who speaks Italian, French, Persian and Hindustani with equal facility. He was governor of Wazirabad, which he had remarkably improved. He had kept the streets of the city clean and had got a beautiful carriage made for himself, and a fine palace. He was a cheerful, clever man, full of fun. He told Wolff at once that he would show him his guardian angels, and took him up to his bedroom, the walls of which were covered with pictures of dancing girls. He and Wolff rode out one day on an elephant, and he said:

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* Political Diaries, Volume VI, pages 2-3.

† Wolff's Travels, Volume II, page 61.

'Now I will show you marks of civilisation which I have introduced into this country.' They rode outside the town and there Wolff saw before him a number of gibbets on which were a great number of malefactors.

"Though the man was full of fun, yet whenever the conversation was directed to important matters, he became most serious. Though he had amassed a fortune in India of £50,000, he was always panting after a return to his native country, and he said to Wolff: 'For God's sake help me to get away from this country.'"

That Avitabile desired to get away is correct, for this year he had written to the Government of India requesting their good offices in procuring his discharge, to which the reply was returned to the effect that as he had entered Sikh service without the knowledge or permission of the British Government, they declined to interest themselves in his behalf.

The earliest mention of his peculiar methods of enforcing law and order appear in the Records on December 10th, 1830, which report that*:—

"Three men were found stealing in the city. They were executed by order of General Avitabile, and their bodies being quartered, were hung at the city gates. Another man was caught throwing oranges from a garden to a confederate in the street. He was deprived of an ear and a hand, and after having been paraded through the streets, was turned out of the city."

In such matters he was a law unto himself, fearing the wrath of Ranjit Singh no more than he did of that God, at whom, as Sohan Lal records, he was, to the disgust of the elderly Sikh sirdars, an open and frequent scoffer. One story showing how little he feared the Maharajah is narrated by Hugel†.

"While Avitabile was at Wazirabad not long ago, six robbers were taken, professors of the Sikh religion, to whom Ranjit Singh thought himself bound to show for-

* Punjab Records, Book No. 110, letter No. 43.

† Hugel's Travels in Kashmir, pages 317-18.

bearance. It was an embarrassing circumstance, this being the second apprehension of the thieves. They were sent to Avitabile, with a command that they should not be allowed to escape again, and the same hour they were hanged. The Maharajah sent for Avitabile in high wrath; all his friends trembled for him, and when he appeared before Ranjit, he was asked how he had dared to hang six Sikhs, who had been given into his safe keeping. Avitabile answered that he thought it the surest means of preventing their escape, and obeying the Maharajah's command. The king laughed at this answer; the event was not taken further notice of.

" The Sikh who told me the story seemed to think it a good joke, and all the people regard him with much reverence."

He inflicted death for the most trivial offences. Honigberger relates that some Mussalman butchers, presuming on the presence of a Christian governor, broke the Sikh law against cow-killing, whereupon Avitabile hanged them, remarking that though he himself saw no crime in the matter, he was bound to carry out the Sikh laws even more rigorously than the Sikhs themselves. Honigberger also remarks that in his medical opinion, Avitabile had, through immoderate indulgence in champagne and other excesses, become more than a little mad. " To this I attribute the pleasure he took in seeing people hanged. I knew him very well, for I lived in his house for three years, and treated him medically.*"

In April, 1835, much against his will, Avitabile was appointed Governor of Peshawar,—a task in which two previous Sikh governors had failed. The state of the town and district was as bad as it could be. Anarchy, murder, and assassination everywhere ran rampant, and a province which should have produced ten lakhs of rupees as annual revenue, did not realise a quarter of it. No Sikh dared to move about except in armed gangs. Robbery, murder, and outrage were not of daily, but of

* Thirty-five Years in the East, page 53.

almost hourly occurrence, and realising that matters were serious, Avitabile insisted upon, and was given, an absolutely free hand. How he used it will be seen.

Then, as now, Peshawar was the refuge, or resort, of the ruthless and savage tribesmen of the Khyber, who valued their own lives as little as those of others, and whose livelihood and pleasure was robbery and murder. Such men could only be ruled by one as savage and brutal as themselves, using power without stint or mercy. What the Khyberees were (and are) may be judged from the fact that even after seventy-five years of British occupation, and with a large cantonment of British and Indian troops near by, no European dares to enter Peshawar city without an escort.

In the civil station every European house must have a Pathan watchman, drawn from the tribesmen, as a kind of insurance, for none other dares take up such a post. These men are all potential robbers and murderers, for though they will not rob the house they are engaged to guard, they will often permit their brethren to rob the next to it, and have been known to exchange robberies.

The military sentries move in barbed wire, and carry shot-guns in lieu of rifles, which latter are too much of a temptation to the Pathan. The guardrooms are miniature forts. In barracks the rifles are chained and locked, and armed patrols move throughout the night. Yet with all these precautions, bungalows are robbed, rifles are stolen, Hindu and occasionally European women are kidnapped across the border and held to ransom after their husbands or fathers have been murdered.

It was not so after a few years of Avitabile regimé. What he grimly called his " silent sentries " reminded the prowling robber and potential murderer who passed by the rotting bodies of his kinsmen, that he might be within an hour or so, their equally silent companion, for Avitabile moved at all hours, whilst in his train followed

the equivalents of "petit Andre and Trois Echelles," and their assistants, who at a gesture from their master, would string up any wanderer whose scowling face or suspicious action provoked a condemnatory gesture. At times the mere fact of the man being a Khyberee, or reputed "budmash," was enough to condemn him, even though others might get a trial, or the semblance of it.

How Avitabile commenced his rule is thus narrated, in his own words :—

*"When I marched into Peshawar I sent on in advance a number of wooden posts, which my men erected around the walls of the city. The men scoffed at them, and laughed at the madness of the Feringhi, and louder still when my men came in and laid coils of rope at the foot of the posts. Guns and swords, said they, were the arms to rule the city, and not sticks and ropes. However, when my preparations were completed, they found one fine morning dangling from these posts, fifty of the worst characters in Peshawar, and I repeated the exhibition every day till I had made a scarcity of brigands and murderers.

"Then I had to deal with the liars and tale-bearers. My method with them was to cut out their tongues......And then a surgeon appeared and professed to be able to restore their speech. I sent for him, and cut out his tongue also. After that there was peace, and in six months there was no crime in Peshawar."

We are afraid that the following quotations rather contradict the General's last observation, for all who passed through Peshawar, bear witness that the gallows bore full fruit to the end of his term. Here follows testimony† :—

*1840.*—"The Government of Peshawar is in the hands of General Avitabile. This government, though severe, is alleged to have kept the savage neighbours in more subjectation than ever was done before. Numerous examples of his methods were presented to our view near

* Life of Avitabile, page 533.

† Mackinnon's Military Service, pages 245-46.

the city walls. On the high palm trees on every side were well furnished gibbets, frail and wasted specimens of humanity being strung on beams nailed between the blighted palms. Those who had recently been promoted to this exalted position were favourites with the kites and vultures, who screamed long life and prosperity to General Avitabile, answered by the rattling of well picked skeletons, which swung in the evening breeze.

"The systematic method of suspension by the neck was not universally adopted, for the executioner varied it by suspending them heads and heels alternatively. The classical punishment of skinning alive was also revived, this being commenced at the soles of the feet and continued upwards, the victim lasting some two hours in intolerable agony. Cutting off limbs, steeping the stumps in oil and docking the ears and noses of the culprits were minor punishments; and one tree was specially reserved for the display of these human fragments.........At dinner that night with Avitabile these gibbets so haunted me that I could hardly persuade myself that the boiled kid and trussed capons were not novel delicacies carved off a skinned criminal."

*Another anecdote related to Colin Mackenzie by Avitabile related to a zemindar, who being suspected of revenue frauds, had been sentenced by the General to a heavy fine. Proving contumacious Avitabile had him stripped and chained to a wall, whilst during the December night, which is piercingly cold in Peshawar, a satellite poured water over the man. Yet Avitabile considered himself aggrieved by the result, for he remarked, "What do you think of that rascal; the scoundrel died out of sheer spite in order to rob me."

"In cases of murder," (we quote a letter, dated 26th March, 1841, from the British Political Assistant at Peshawar), "a thirst for private vengeance is encouraged contrary to the spirit of the law, by the relations of the deceased being permitted to kill the guilty person. One revolting instance of it took place a short time back. A man assassinated another. To obtain the price of blood,

* Life of Avitabile, page 540.

Avitabile kept him in prison for some time, and then exposed him stark naked to the scorching heat of the sun and to the attacks of the insects, etc., with half of his body painted red. As he continued obstinate, the mother of the slain was permitted to use her right of slaughtering him with a knife, which she not only did, but in her delirious and savage joy, stooped down and drank two handfuls of his blood, as it welled from the death wound."

Some other Peshawaris who also proved obdurate to a fine were dealt with by being tied together and a wall built round them leaving no space within which to move. Each day they were asked to pay, and on still refusing, a few more courses were added to the erection. Yet, though without either water or food, they held out for six days, until the crowning arch had begun to close in upon them, before surrendering. Meanwhile, on the third day one of them had died, the others being compelled to keep the rotting body upright in their midst. Naturally, when they were brought before Avitabile, the stench from the garments of the survivors was so dreadful that he ordered them to be instantly removed and buried to the neck in fresh soil, to "sweeten them up."

*Still another anecdote is vouched for by the Catholic Bishop of Lucknow, who had it from the General himself. Some Barakzai sirdars had paid a visit to the General, and, the interview completed, had left for the Khyber, whilst the General proceeded on his usual rounds. At some distance from Peshawar the sirdars dicovered that an article of value had been left behind and sent a messenger back to obtain it. Having done so he was leaving the Ghorkhatra just as Avitabile was returning. Seeing him to be a stranger, Avitabile gave orders for his immediate execution, and despite the man's attempts at explanation, this was done.

Puzzled at the failure of the messenger to return, the Sirdars sent another one to inquire as to what had happened, who, on being introduced to the General, was

* Life of Avitabile, page 538.

informed that his predecessor had been hanged on suspicion, and informed that unless he absented himself at once he would suffer the same fate. When, angered at such treatment, the Sirdars themselves came back, Avitabile expressed his regrets, and handsomely offered to hand over the corpse of the man who had been hanged!

He looked upon the Khyberees as merely human vermin, whose most useful purpose was to exterminate each other, and one of the conditions under which Kalandar Khan, a local chief, held his jaghir from Avitabile, was a yearly tribute of fifty Afridi heads. His system of dealing with these people was to keep them eternally by the ears, and make use of the eternal blood-feuds to extract revenue from either side, whom he supplied with arms and ammunition, descending on both when sufficiently exhausted and confiscating their cattle. A typical example of his methods occurs in the Records under date May, 1840*.

"The Government of India protests most strongly against the unwarrantable proceedings of General Avitabile in having preferred a demand against the Afridis of the Khyber for the revenue of the lands lying between Jamrud and the mouth of the Khyber, and in employing the Orakzais to enforce their demand; in having prohibited all intercourse between Jellalabad and Peshawar, and detained merchants proceeding into Afghanistan, and lastly in having seized some Afridi subjects of the British Government in revenge for cattle plundered by some others of that tribe. If this conduct is not remedied, the British Government will demand the withdrawal of General Avitabile from Peshawar."

Just at the moment nothing would have pleased Avitabile better than the latter course, for he had accumulated sufficient wealth and desired only to get away with it. Yet only a little later we find this same government requesting that at any cost, Avitabile should be retained at Peshawar for by now the value of his presence there had been realised.

* Punjab Records, Book No. 40, letter No. 1.

His hospitality towards the officers passing up and down to Kabul was unbounded, although we find a letter protesting against the heavy expenses incurred, and asking for a grant from the Durbar Government, who gave him an extra Rs. 1,000 a month. At the same time, the Government of India, who had heard of the disgraceful orgies which attended some of the entertainments, directed that none but the most senior officers were to be entertained by him, and gave the political officer an allowance of Rs. 500 a month, on account of the younger ones. Barr, gives us a glimpse of Avitabile's appearance at this period :—

*" General Avitabile is a fine stout man, upwards of six feet high. He has a pleasing, yet determined countenance, from which you can see at once that when he issues an order, he means it to be promptly obeyed, and woe to the man who neglects it. He wears a beard of grey colour reaching half way down his chest; and dresses very magnificently. His costume consists of a long green coat, not unlike a chupkan, ornamented with a profusion of gold lace, and with three rows of gold buttons; trousers of scarlet cloth with a broad gold lace band down the seams; a green velvet cap with a gold lace band, and tassels of the same material, which he invariably retains on his head whether indoors or out, in accordance with the Indian custom of never uncovering the head.

" Slung to a heavily embroidered scabbard was a very handsome sabre, the scabbard of green velvet, but so covered with gold and studded with jewels that only a small portion of the velvet was visible. The blade originally belonged to Akbar Khan, and cost him Rs. 5,000. As the setting cost another Rs. 1,000, it became rather an expensive weapon. Behind him stood a couple of diminutive Afghan boys very gorgeously dressed, who looked quite out of place with such a masculine individual as Avitabile."

†Havelock supplies more details :—

" The general, though in private life the mildest of men, rules the Peshawaris with a rod of iron, the only

* Journal of a March, etc., page 231.
† War in Afghanistan (Havelock), Volume II, pages 195-97.

means of governing them. He has established his military, financial, and civil headquarters in the great sarai called the Ghorkhatra.

"He particularly, and very justly, prides himself on the excellence of his table, and keeps an establishment of no less than eight cooks, all well versed in the mysteries of Persian, English and French cookery. He is a frank, gay, and good-humoured person, as well as an excellent ruler and a skilful officer. His reputation as a skilful governor had been well established in the Punjab, and even reached India, when he was in charge of the town and district of Wazirabad, and Ranjit Singh showed his usual sagacity when he entrusted the Government of Peshawar to him soon after its conquest.

"He is a man of princely habits, and his dress, chargers and equipage all partake of the splendour which is calculated to uphold and give *éclat* to his authority amongst a people like the Afghans. He is very hospitable, and notwithstanding all his hospitality and magnificience, is said to have accumulated eight lakhs of rupees, all of which is invested in British Government securities."

This statement as to eight lakhs may have been correct as a total, but the actual closing account with the Government of India late in 1842, was four and three quarter lakhs. How he managed to get his wealth away from the Punjab was simple, for, both the Government of India and individual officers at Peshawar were badly in need of money, which Avitabile lent, taking in exchange bills on India. As to his methods of administration, Captain Mackinnon writes* :—

"During Avitabile's first year of office in Peshawar, no less than 500 Sikhs were assassinated. It is not so now. The Neapolitan's vigorous methods are those best suited to such an unprincipled people as the Khyberees, who even in their remotest caravans tremble at the very name of Avitabile."

Colin Mackenzie records that :—

†"Breakfasting with the General one morning, I observed that a large box secured by a padlock was let

* Mackinnon: Military Service in Afghanistan, page 200.
† Life of Avitabile, page 539.

down outside the window in a much frequented thoroughfare. This was to receive all petitions, none of which could be intercepted *en route* as the General kept the keys! He hangs a dozen unhappy culprits; looks to the payment of his troops ; inspects his poultry yards and domestic concerns; sets agoing a number of musical boxes and attends to many other things all before dinner at noon."

As showing that Avitabile did not always hang out of hand Sir Henry Durand records :—

* " I called upon Avitabile and found him employed in giving decisions with his judges around him. Two Kazis, two Hindus, and two Sikhs formed his conclave. He gave us a sketch of his policy, which was amusing enough. He never uses his troops to quell disturbances, but when two troops fight he offers them ammunition to fight it out. Suspended outside the court were ghastly warnings to the disaffected population. Between the trees were double and triple rows of unfortunate culprits, hanging one above the other."

The letters concerning the first Afghan War existing in the original in the Punjab Records show that the presence of Avitabile at Peshawar was indispensible to the British Government, both before and after the disaster of the Khyber retreat. The force furnished by the Durbar under the conditions of the tri-partite treaty, were more inclined to fight against, than for, the British.

The Sikhs greatly disliked the treaty, and looked upon their present allies as potential conquerors, with whom conflict was sooner or later inevitable, and, indeed, did their best to provoke reprisals. So bitter was their hatred that even important officers, though with escorts, were derided, reviled, or publicly insulted by the Sikh troops, and we find a number of vehement letters on this subject from such persons, including Henry Lawrence himself. The Khalsa troops also attacked convoys of British treasure, on one occasion plundering three lakhs in coin, and on another a concerted attack was made upon the

* Life of Sir Henry Durand, page 63.

Commissariat godowns at Peshawar, which were looted and burnt.*

It is only when studying these old papers that one realises how fatuously incompetent the great majority of the British officers of those days, and of that expedition, were. Many of the juniors were no better, especially the politicals, most of whom had been selected for reasons other than competence to deal effectively with the vast problems entrusted to them.

Amidst the welter of official incompetence, stupid arrogance, querulous complaint and senile inefficiency, displayed by most who took part in the foolish and fatal attempt to foist Shah Shujah on to an unwilling people, and the disasters which followed it, three men at Peshawar stand forth as contrasts to the mediocre and often blind persons in authority. These were the Englishmen Lawrence and Mackeson, and the Italian officer of the Khalsa.

Both the British officers knew how useful the presence of Avitabile at Peshawar was to the British, and that the dread in which Sikh and Afghan alike held him was all that prevented the two from uniting against the British troops at Peshawar, and cutting off all access to, or exit from the Khyber.

Avitabile himself was anxious to be away, for he knew that with the death of Ranjit Singh the extinction of the ram-shackle Sikh raj was a matter of time. In a letter to the durbar, he bluntly informed them that it was impossible for any person to serve a government which had long since ceased to enforce law and order and command respect, or even obedience. However, he added that he would remain at Peshawar until relieved by an efficient person, for to quit the service at such a time was contrary to European notions of honour and fidelity.

Captain Mackeson records, under date May, 1841.

* Punjab Records, Book No. 40, letter No. 96.

*"I have used every endeavour to persuade General Avitabile to remain a few months longer, as I am convinced that his withdrawal at the present moment will be disastrous," and the newswriter thus remarks :—

†" They are casting about everywhere for a man to relieve General Avitabile; meanwhile keeping him pacified with promises of speedy relief. It will be difficult to find such a man, for he must, like General Avitabile, combine within himself the principles of stratagem, fearlessness, and resolution. Such a man is impossible to find, and for the present General Avitabile must remain."

For the narrative of following events we cannot improve upon the official reports, and with little emendation or addition, give them below‡.

" *May 1841.*—With the exception of three battalions of his own, raised and trained by him, and some artillery, the General's troops, like their Khalsa brethren, have long since disdained submission to authority as a weakness unworthy of a discipline of the Guru. Maharajah Sher Singh dare not let Avitabile march against them."

" General Avitabile's having possession of the means of paying the troops at Peshawar did not prevent a mutiny breaking out in the najib (Mussulman) battalions, caused by their having heard that they were to get only eight annas increase of pay instead of one rupee, as given to the troops at Lahore. The mutiny was only quelled by General Avitabile yielding to their demands. Reports prevailed that the najibs intended to make a night attack on the Ghorkhatra, the General's residence, with the object of making him prisoner. The gates of the city were closed from this date, and General Avitabile took measures for his self protection by entertaining a bodyguard of Afghans. These men were not visible during the day, but they mounted guard on his residence at night.

" The najib battalions, if they ever intended, did not carry into effect their threat and attack the Ghorkhatra on the 2nd instant; their demands having been complied with, they returned to their duty. If the reports we had

* Punjab Records, Book No. 40, letter No. 115.
† Punjab Records, Book No. 40, letter No. 125.
‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 40, letter No. 120, 125.

from the people of the town may be depended on, they indulged in most abusive language against General Avitabile, whom they threatened to treat as the troops had treated the Kashmir Governor. (He had refused to give the increase, whereupon they murdered him and burnt his body).

" Everything continued quiet here up to the 8th inst., when the Sikh battalion, erroneously called the Kashmira battalion, came for their pay. Colonel Steinbach, who was till lately in command of this battalion, though he never possessed much authority in it, had left Peshawar on the 5th inst., in company with M. Court under the safe conduct of Sardar Fateh Singh Man, to return to Lahore. An officer attached to this agency was present at the interview, between him and a deputation which waited upon him on behalf of the battalion under his command. The behaviour of this deputation to their officer was most insolent. They told him that the battalion understood he was about to leave them to return to Lahore, and that however, insignificant and contemptible he was, he must not expect to be let off so cheaply as this, and that he must obtain from Maharajah Sher Singh a favourable answer to all their demands.

" On the 8th inst., this battalion came to receive their pay, as the najibs had done before them. Avitabile met them outside the Ghorkhatra before taking his early morning ride, and after having read to them the latest parwannah, that had reached him from the Maharajah, relative to their pay, and finding no dissenting voices, left his munshi to disburse the money authorised to be paid them. In the General's absence the sipahis refused to receive their pay, unless arrears due to them from the time of Ranjit Singh had been paid, and commenced abusing General Avitabile in unmeasured terms.

" The General's munshi, seeing them intent on creating a disturbance, wrote to the General, begging him not to think of returning to the Ghorkhatra. On receiving the munshi's message, the General at once returned with the few horsemen and attendants he had about him. His presence over-awed the mutineers in the first instance, but they did not abate from their demands. Avitabile agreed



Najib or Musalman Sepoy, 1838.

to give them Rs. 2,000 per company on condition of their refunding it if not sanctioned by the Lahore Government. Two companies went away satisfied with this addition to their pay, but when the rest came to be paid, they, emboldened by the success of their first demands, became more extravagant than ever.

" Some required compensation for clothing they had not had, others wished to recover deductions made from their pay at former periods, as they considered, improperly. In short, they could not be satisfied. They were also supported by their officers, who in their zeal to support their men, refused to leave the General's presence till he had satisfied them.

" The General, under much provocation, gave orders to the guard in the Ghorkhatra to turn out the remaining two companies. The latter retired, though not without loading their muskets, and vowing that they would take the General's life. After their retirement to their camp, about three miles from Peshawar, the gates of the city were closed, and all men found in the city belonging to the Kashmira Regiment (of whom there were about thirty) were seized and put into irons in the Ghorkhatra, where they still remain. Two jemadars of golandauz and twenty golandauz, who were detected in the act of having conspired to carry off their guns to the Kashmira battalion were also seized and put into confinement.

" General Avitabile lost no time in collecting together a body of Afghans to the number of 3,000, giving the order to raise and command them, to Kalandar Khan of Chamkanni and Fateh Din Mahomand. These parties have both been employed, more or less and countenanced by the officers of the British Government, and hence probably their selection for the duty entrusted to them, which was no less than to march during the night and having surrounded the Sikh battalion at Chamkanni, to massacre them to a man! It was held out to them as an inducement and a spur to their courage that every Sikh soldier had on his person at least Rs. 80 in hard cash, which would become the property of the victors.

" General Avitabile, on the evening of the 8th, sent two companies of najibs of his own accord for our pro-

tection, the mutineers having been heard to say that they would seize my person when all their demands would be complied with. We should have been safer without his guard, in which we placed no confidence, and I shall endeavour, without exciting suspicion, to have them withdrawn.

"This morning (June 8th) a rapid and sustained fire of musketry was heard in the direction of Chamkanni. It lasted from sunrise to half past 7 A.M., and then became fainter and at 8 o'clock ceased altogether. The reports that have hitherto reached us from the action state that the Sikhs have entrenched themselves during the night, having had timely intimation of the proposed attack upon them. The Afghans attacked without plan or order, and are said to have suffered much loss. They had driven the Sikhs from a fort they had occupied, but they were still in possession of a strong position and the action has ceased to be vigorous on either side.

"I learn from General Avitabile that his original intention was that the Oolasdari troops (tribal levies) were to have made a night attack on the Sikh battalion at Chamkanni, but this was prevented by the boisterous weather and complete darkness which prevailed throughout the night. At seven in the morning the battalion of Sikhs, whom I am now told would have completely been taken by surprise, had it not been that a party of the Oolas left the main object of attack to plunder the hundred head of cattle belonging to the battalion, which were grazing outside the camp. This put the Sikhs on their guard, and prepared them to receive the attack on the part of the Afghans. which commenced at daylight.

"The Afghans gave themselves up to plunder immediately on entering the Sikh camp (naturally) and the latter, seeing them thus engaged, poured in volley after volley, and again advancing, compelled them to retreat. In this retreat, the Afghans lost some 40 killed and wounded. The Sikh loss is stated at 45 killed and wounded, which includes four men. Much of their property was plundered.

"The Sikhs wrote in the course of the morning to General Avitabile, expressing their regret for their past misconduct and their unconditional surrender and sub-

mission to his orders. They begged he would allow them to escape with their lives, and they would leave behind all the Government property in their possession, their arms and tents, and also return all the money that had been paid to them, or rather the payment of which they had expected the day before. As the day advanced and they saw their enemies increasing, for the Afghans, from their appetite for plunder, were collecting from every village, they appeared to have become more and more alarmed and sent one of their officers to General Avitabile, offering to abide by his orders in every respect.

" After the arrival of their deputy, and at the intercession of the officers of the two najib battalions, he agreed to pardon their former mutinous conduct on condition of their returning to Peshawar, restoring the money they had exacted, and receiving their pay as the najibs had done. On their expressing willingness to submit to these terms, orders were sent to withdraw the Oolasdari troops, who accordingly all returned to Peshawar, leaving the Sikh battalion to burn their dead.

" *23rd June, 1841.*—The Sikhs have refunded to General Avitabile all the money they had drawn in excess, and also the pay four companies had received. He has given them the option of returning to the Yusufzai country or proceeding to Lahore on leave. They have decided to return to the Yusufzai country. In recompense for the services rendered by the Afghans, General Avitabile has pardoned all their past offences against the state, released a large number of prisoners (otherwise destined for the rope) and allowed them to keep their plunder."

Lord Ellenborough, in answering the correspondence agreed with Captain Mackeson that though such proceedings were hardly likely to add to the General's pupolarity, there was apparently no alternative, for his position at Peshawar was already so bad that nothing could make it worse. " Desperate diseases demanded desperate remedies and drastic applications."

In April 1843, Avitabile was relieved and left for Lahore, where he remained for some months, engaged in

settling his affairs, and closing his accounts, realising everything he possibly could, and leaving not an anna behind him. During the whole of this period he resided in his house on the Budh-ka-Awa, and though the mound itself was still the meeting place of the conspirators, and principal actors in the Anarchy, none ever attempted to molest him, for his recent exploits, added to his past reputation, made him feared.

What happened to his numerous female entourage is not stated, but probably they were divided up amongst his friends or pensioned. We find no trace of any of his offspring, with the exception of a daughter by a Pathani girl who held Avitabile's wavering affections for a considerable time. Of this daughter, Lawrence relates the following pathetic little story* :—

" So carefully was she watched that even her meals were conveyed to her by means of a turnport, such as is used in convents. The very shadow of man had never crossed the threshold of her retreat. It may be asked, ' For what high destiny was this fair damsel reserved?' Romance may conjure up a picture of a Prince or nobleman of high degree, but stern fact compels us to the prosaic fact that Avitabile married her to his cook, to whom he gave a large dowry of gold and jewels, for he did not wish to be burdened with her in Europe.

" Avitabile departed and the cook and his little wife sank into private life, wishing for nothing more than to enjoy their wealth in peace. But they lived in times when the government was poor and it was *lèse majesté* for a subject to be rich, and such as were defenceless were easy prey. The traitor was one who owed Avitabile everything, for he had risen under his patronage from a humble clerk to a diwan, ultimately succeeding to the command of his battalions when the general retired to Europe. Knowing their wealth, he sought to gain favour by betraying his master's daughter, and having done so was entrusted with the task of robbing the spoilt child of all her jewels and fortune, leaving both her and her husband in abject poverty."

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* Calcutta Review, Volume VI, pages 247-48.

This scoundrel was Pundit Jodha Ram, for whom a fitting punishment was in store; this came a year later when he lost nose, ears, and fingers, at the hands of a scoundrel as despicable as himself (Gardiner).

In September 1843, immediately after the death of Sher Singh, Avitabile left Lahore for Simla, where he called upon the Governor-General, who, in spite of his eminent services to the Company, received him with extreme coolness, most probably on account of his moral delinquencies and fiendish cruelties. So after a very short stay he passed on to Calcutta. Here his reception was in marked contrast to that at Simla, for celebrity had eclipsed notoriety, and the wildest tales regarding his wealth and exploits being current, he was an object of curiosity from European and Indian alike.

The Calcutta papers of the period described him "as a dignified and courtly old man, very quiet in speech and demeanour, and apparently worn out." His reticence was probably due to the fact that for nearly twenty years he had been out of touch with cultured society, if indeed he had ever endured much of it. From Calcutta he travelled to Naples, where he was received by the King and honoured with the Cross of St. Ferdinand and the title of honorary general in the Neapolitan army, probably in return for many substantial presents, amongst whom were the two Afghan boys, mentioned by Barr, who had accompanied Avitabile from India.

Leaving Naples he visited Paris, where he was received by Louis Philippe, and awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honour, and another title of General in the French army. From thence to London, where the East India Company entertained him to a banquet at East India House, at which he was presented with an address and a Sword of Honour, valued at 300 guineas, in recognition of his service to the Company during the Afghan War. He was also called upon to interview the Duke of Wellington, to whom he confided much, till then unknown,

information regarding Afghan affairs and the conduct of the war.

Whilst in London, he realised his securities, and then returning to Naples, made himself a home at Castelamare, where however, he lived for only a few years, as his peculiar habits and intrigues with the peasant women, rendered him obnoxious to the neighbourhood, who complained to the King, and the latter, after inquiry, intimated to Avitabile that he had better seek a more secluded spot.

Accepting the hint, the General abandoned his Castelamare mansion, and commenced another on the summit of a mountain over-hanging Agerola, which however, was never completed, for death met him when it was about three parts through. The facts were for some time obscure, but Mr. J. J. Cotton, who visited Agerola for the purpose of inquiring into the circumstances surrounding Avitabile's death, elicited that the General's family being determined to keep his money among them, got him married by Papal dispensation to his niece, a buxom young contadina of nineteen.

Trouble, such as was inevitable in such an ill-assorted union, was not long in coming, for before her marriage the girl had carried on an intrigue with a village lawyer, which continued. The facts were soon brought to Avitabile's notice, and his threats of what would happen should he ever catch the two together must have precipitated the end, which came in March 1850.

Being impatient to reside in his new home, Avitabile took up his quarters in one of the partly finished rooms, which, as the season was winter, was warmed by a charcoal brazier. Whether by accident or intent, this brazier was filled on that fatal night by crude charcoal. At eleven o'clock Avitabile ate a heavy supper of roast lamb, which was also suspected to have been poisoned, and after this the servants, who lived in the village below, left him for the night.

At daybreak, the first who returned found his master groaning in agony, and muttering that he had been poisoned. Whatever the cause, he was dead before the doctor arrived, nor was any *post-mortem* ever made, which fact, added to the mysterious removals of property, and movements of his servants on the previous night, seemed to corroborate his dying assertion.

Whatever the manner of his death, none can say that he had not merited a violent one, for the number he had sent before him by such means is incredible, and undoubtedly, all did not deserve it.

Immediately after his death, a swarm of litigants settled down on the estate, and so protracted and venomous were the proceedings that eventually the whole of the assets benefitted only the lawyers. Even now, applications for information regarding the great sums of money alleged to have been left at Lahore by Avitabile reach the Government, but, as we have asserted, Avitabile left absolutely nothing behind him, except a smirched reputation for morality, though a first class one as a governor.

## CHAPTER IX

### CLAUDE AUGUSTE COURT — SENOR OMS

### BARON DE MEVIUS — COLONEL JOHN HOLMES

Claude Auguste Court, General in the Khalsa Army, Honorary General of France, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, of the Auspicious order of the Punjab, of the Durrani order of Empire, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of England, and member of many continental scientific and learned societies, was born at Grasse on the Mediterranean Coast of France in the year 1793.

In 1813 he passed out from the Military Polytechnique at Paris, and was commissioned into the 68th Infantry of the line with which he saw service in Saxony prior to the battle of Leipzig at which he was severely wounded. After rejoining his regiment he took part in the operations in France against the invading armies of Russia and Germany which resulted in the defeat of Napoleon and his exile to Elba; after which Court was placed on half pay.

After the 'Hundred Days' he was, possibly owing to shortage of officers, restored to the establishment as a Lieutenant of Infantry. In 1818 he resigned the service, his reason being that there were no prospects for officers appointed by Napoleon, the Bourbon King having to provide for the returned Emigrés, and the sons of the aristocracy; and he then left France to seek military service abroad.

Precisely when he entered the service of Mirza Mohammad Ali of Persia we have not been able to ascertain, but it must have been about the same time as Avitabile, with whom, though the men were entirely dissimilar in manners, morals and tastes, he made firm friends. He remained in the Persian service after Avitabile had

left it. But, as owing to the British influence having become paramount in Persia and the army having been placed under control of British officers from India, prospects for the Continental Officers were very poor, Avitabile must have had no difficulty in inducing Court to resign and accompany him to the Punjab.

Fortunately Court, who was a shrewd, educated and observant man, realised that such information as he might be able to collect and set down concerning the geological, geographical, archaeological, and military details of these little-known countries might be of general interest, and perhaps of particular profit, to himself. So he set down his observations in an Itinerary, which, after it had lain untranslated for many years in the archives of the Government of India, we have been permitted to translate and publish.*

As this document contained much of military value and must have been consulted during the Afghan and Frontier troubles of 1838—42, it must have been kept in the original French as a confidential document, and in that form safer from copying. Interesting as are these observations, on their own account, they are still more so as showing how little some matters have altered for Court's account of the atrocities of the Baluchi robbers of the sand dunes of the great desert is exactly the same as that of Colonel Etherton written in 1927.

Even to persons acquainted with Court the existence of this record was unknown and as showing how valuable it is, we may quote the opinion of the French traveller named Fontainier who, in 1843 wrote :—

†" Some years ago an Italian named Ventura and a French Captain named Allard, at the suggestion of the Russian Minister at Teheran (M. Mazarwitch) followed this route and at a later date M. Court, a Lieutenant of the Old Imperial Guard, who was far superior in informa-

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* *Vide* Appendix III.

† Calcutta Review, Volume II, 1844, page 288.

tion and education to his predecessors, had followed the same route. I am not aware if M. Court took notes of his journey, but if he had they would have been of far more value than those of Sir Alexander Burnes, for, independent of his being an excellent scholar and draftsman, M. Court spoke Persian, not as most Europeans do with difficulty, and inaccuracy, but correctly. He was also well acquainted with Persian literature."

Had Burnes been alive when these remarks were published, and read them " he would have been amused, for not only had he seen Court's Diary, but thus remarked upon it* " :—

" M. Court had travelled overland through Persia and the Countries we were about to visit. He drew up a précis of informations, and instructions for me, the result of his own observations. M. Court struck me as an acute and well informed person who is also an Antiquarian and Geographer. He was formerly in the service of one of the Persian Princes, and travelled to India as a native of those countries which gained him the opportunity of acquiring the best information. He showed me the route by Kerman Shah, Herat, Ghazni and Kandahar constructed topographically with great care. This gentleman has employed his residence in the Punjab to complete its geography. To his honour, let it be said that he is always willing to disseminate his knowledge."

The value of this " Itinerary " so impressed Burnes that he advised Court to submit it to the Government of India by whom after it had been examined and reported upon by Captain Wade, the Political Assistant at Ludhiana, it was purchased for Rs. 5,000 in 1833† :—

Further, concerning Court as a scholar, we have the testimony of Henry Lawrence who wrote ‡, " M. Court was the most respectable of all the French Officers in Ranjit Singh's service. A person of high literary attainments and cautious and retiring disposition."

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* Travels to Bokhara, Volume I, page 135.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 116, letter No. 34.

‡ Punjab Records, Court's File No. 1835.

Court's Itinerary brings the travellers up to Kabul and the protection of Nawab Jubbar Khan and from that point we continue the story until their arrival at Lahore. They left Kabul in December 1826, but only to encounter further trouble on their arrival at Peshawar for Yar Mohammad Khan, Governor of that city, was then in one of his periodical revolts against the Sikh suzerainty and detained them in custody. Nor did they regain their liberty until early in February 1827, when Yar Mohammad Khan was driven to the hills by the Sikh army. He made peace later and was restored to his Governorship.

Their arrival at Kabul was made known to Ranjit Singh by Ventura, and we note that this gentleman was not above a little inexactitude in his endeavour to forward the interests of his friends, for he told Dr. Murray that one of the gentlemen* "was a cousin german of his and had come to India for the purpose of seeing him and had no intention of entering the Raja's service. He had been a Colonel of the Imperial Guard under Napoleon.........I rather think that he has been invited to come to India by his friends here. and that he will have the organisation of the Artillery confided to him on his arrival."

The description exactly fits neither Court nor Avitabile, though Avitabile was the artilleryman. Yet not to him, but to Court, the infantryman, was the "organisation of the Artillery confided", whilst Avitabile was given an infantry battalion only, for the time being. Court was also given an infantry battalion, but, in addition, became the Ordnance Officer of the Khalsa Army, a position for which his scientific acquirements admirably suited him.

As to what he accomplished in this direction there is abundant testimony, some of which we will quote.

*Thorburn*†.—" The cannon taken during the Sikh War were beautifully made and exquisitely finished, and being of much heavier metal considerably outranged the lighter guns used by the British."

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* Murray's letters, No. 32, Volume 19, Range 125.
† Punjab in Peace and War, page 352.

Of one of the largest made under Court's supervision Muhammad Latif has preserved the inscription, engraved upon it in Persian. I ran—*

" By the grace of the immortal, in the Reign of the Great Monarch, Ranjit Singh Bahadur (may his state and monarchy last for ever) this Gun named Lalal was cast in Sambat 1887 (A. D. 1830 the year of the holy Bikramajit) by the Noble and Sacred Order of His Majesty under the superintendence of the Sahib possessing wisdom like Aristotle, the Plato of the Age, Monsieur General Court, the Valiant, in the Manufactory of the Idgah, under the Guidance of Fasl Ali, Commandant, the pupil of the said Sahib."

The greater part of the guns that were cast under Court's supervision and survived the Sikh wars were sent to Calcutta after their conclusion. They remained in the Arsenal Store Yard for many years until, when the great war caused a shortage of munition material, they were melted down. Other testimony as to Court's abilities as an Ordnance Officer will be found in Chapter III, and besides we may quote Baron Hugel, and Alexander Burnes.

Hugel writes† :—" Having observed the fearful havoc caused by such missiles (shells) Ranjit Singh ordered his European Officers to provide the same for his Artillery, and the first shell which exploded was worth Rs. 30,000 to Colonel Court."

With the usual generosity of statement Gardiner makes the sum Rs. 50,000, a sum often quoted but, knowing Ranjit Singh's habitual parsimony, the sum mentioned by Burnes seems to be the actual amount.

" *Lahore, 1831.*—They are unacquainted with the art of fusing iron at Lahore, and all their shells are cast in brass. The day we arrived there, M. Court exhibited one to the Maharaja and was rewarded for his success a purse of Rs. 5,000, jewels and other gifts."‡

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* History of Lahore, page 387.

† Travels in Kashmir, page 329.

‡ Travels in Bokhara, Volume II, page 14.

On first entering the service Court was given a salary of Rs. 500* per month which speedily increased until four years later it reached Rs. 2,500 at which sum his salary remained fixed, but, from time to time specially good work was rewarded by Jaghirs which eventually gave an addition of Rs. 650 monthly. He was promoted to General in 1836 in company with seven others of whom Ventura was the only other European, Allard having only the courtesy title and Avitabile only attaining that rank after the death of Ranjit Singh.

In 1833 the whole of the Khalsa Army was re-organised on the model of the " Francese Campo " into brigades composed of three or four infantry battalions, a regiment or so of cavalry and a battery or two of artillery according to strength, though the artillery always remained semi-independent until after the death of the Maharaja, who, as we have already remarked, never entrusted the European Officers with the independent command of artillery units.

These brigades were cantoned, or quartered in a circle around Lahore, those of Allard and Ventura being at Anarkali, that of Avitabile at Naulakha and that of Court at Begumpura, which is now known by its resuscitated Moghal name of Moghalpura. The brigades of the Indian Generals were stationed at Mian Mir or what is known as Lahore Cantonment.

The sites of the Cantonments of Avitabile and Court are now covered by the North-Western Railway Station Yard, Stores and Works. That of Naulakha is now the Goods Yard and the Station of Lahore, whilst that of Begumpura is now occupied by the great Locomotive and Carriage and Wagon Works of this Railway system.

Within the latter still stands the 17th century tomb of Nasrat Ali Khan, once a great Amir or courtier of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The ancient mausoleum then

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* Khalsa Durbar Records, Volume I, page 33.

lying solitary and deserted, a dwelling place at will for wandering Akalis, Faqirs or beggars, Ranjit Singh, in accordance with his usual custom of desecrating Mohamadan tombs, made over to Court as a residence. He fitted the interior with temporary structures and around it built an enclosure in one corner of which was built a small mosque in which his Kashmiri wife used to worship until her death in 1837 when she was buried beneath the floor.

Though the interior has been cleared and all the additions long since swept away, the old mausoleum still stands grey and towering in the centre of the works, its dome resounding by day to the clang of automatic rivetters, the shriek of the shunting whistles or the rumble of passing wagons.

Occasionally when passing the Tomb by night in the course of a solitary walk, we have stood and pondered amid the unaccustomed silence on the many denizens who have occupied it since he, in whose honour it was built, was laid beneath its floor. Since the decay of the Mogul Empire, it has been the temporary abode of many and for years the permanent home of an alien adventurer and his gentle Kashmiri wife. Since Court departed, it has been occupied by a Sikh Sardar, then made a store house for British military material and finally the dumping ground for scrap iron and discarded machinery.

A few years ago the place was cleared out and repaired and now surrounded by an iron fence, put up by the Railway Authorities, it stands awaiting its turn to follow the hundreds of similar structures which once covered the neighbourhood, of which but a few remain, most having fallen to ruins, or, worse still, been destroyed to make railway ballast many years ago. "Eheu Fugaces."

As with the other European Officers of the Khalsa Army, we are unable to definitely trace Court's war services. However, he was present at the taking of

Peshawar in 1834, and at the battle of Jamrud in May 1837 the timely arrival of his brigades saved the Sikhs from utter annihilation by the Afghans. Of his personal appearance Barr writes* :—

"General Court was very well dressed but, being a short thick man well pitted with the small pox, he did not appear to the same advantage as Avitabile. The first glimpse I got of him impressed me with his resemblance to a rough and ready sailor, and the same impression was prevalent throughout our party. He wore an open Horse Artillery full dress jacket, displaying beneath it a red waistcoat, both garments profusely decorated with gold lace. His trousers were of scarlet cloth with a broad gold band of lace down the seams and a green velvet cap with a gold lace band and tassel, but without a peak. He carried a very handsome sabre in a green velvet scabbard with gold mountings."

Court's forte being more that of a departmental administrator than of an active soldier capable of controlling the disorderly soldiers of the Khalsa Army, he was quite unable to manage them in the exceptional times which followed after the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839. Consequently his brigade quickly became the most ruffianly and turbulent amongst a force, itself rather distinguished in this direction. They were prominent in the attack on Lahore Fort in January 1841 and in the appalling outrages perpetrated on the inhabitants of Lahore both before and after, and following that, in every adventure promising blood and plunder.

They had not long returned from the usual tour of duty at Peshawar when it was rumoured that Sher Singh was about to make a bid for the throne. Knowing the character of Court's division the Durbar decided to return it to Peshawar to be out of the way of temptation. But giving an order by the Durbar and having it obeyed, were at this period very different things and Court's Division

* Journal of a March, page 232.

flatly refused to leave Lahore and its possibilities. Under date 3rd of January 1841 we read that* :—

"General Court has been directed to proceed to Peshawar with his battalions, but had declined on the plea that his officers refuse to go again out of their turn. The state of affairs at the Lahore Court is such as to render it almost impossible for the principal foreign officers there present to avoid suspicion of being prominent political characters. The most retiring and cautious of all, M. Court, is regarded as inclining to the cause of Sher Singh, and in consequence it is contemplated to send him to an appointment in the Kulu or Mandi Hills."

However, the latter intention was not carried out for Court's men were as equally averse to Kulu as to Peshawar and again scented the intention to get them out of the way. Consequently when on morning of the 13th of January 1841 Sher Singh invoked the aid of the troops at Naulakha and Begumpura, Court's division was the first to join him and the most prominent in the attack on Fort Lahore. As the subsequent proceedings are fully detailed in our Appendix, the Anarchy in the Punjab, we need here only speak of the consequences to himself of Court's abstention from active leadership. It is said, that though his sympathies laid with Sher Singh, he had taken an oath of fidelity to the reigning authorities, and being an honourable man held aloof.

The news letter from Lahore of the 26th of January 1841 states† :—"M. Court is obliged to keep away from the capital, or to protect his life with Artillery. The mutineers of the regular army usually discriminate between those who have had no consideration for them, and those who have been abusive, fraudulent, or tyrannical. Europeans and Indians suffer alike. M. Court seems especially to have incurred the rancour of the troops!"

"*Lahore, 27th January, 1841*‡.—The latest outrage has been a furious attack on the house of M. Court (at

* Punjab Records, Book No. 151, letter No. 2.
† Punjab Records, Book No. 151, letter No. 20.
‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 151, letter No. 22.

Begumpura) caused by the armed resistance offered by his servants to a band of plunderers. M. Court made his escape to Ventura's house, who, when attacked, had recourse to Artillery to protect his friend. It appears that the Troops suspect Court of being instrumental in having the Rs. 4 a month increase of pay promised by Sher Singh cut down to Rs. 2."

Court took refuge at Ferozepur in British Territory and there resided with Henry Lawrence and other British Officers for nearly twelve months. He spent most of the time in endeavouring to secure his arrears of pay amounting to Rs. 60,000. In so doing, he applied to the Government of India for assistance but they, though consenting to forward his letters to Sher Singh, did so without any endorsement, remarking that the matter was purely a personal one between Court and the Maharajah, and also that as he had entered the Punjab in the first place without their permission, they could not be expected to interfere on his behalf.

Evenutally Court was paid Rs. 7,000 of his arrears but naturally not being satisfied with this ventured on a trip to Lahore for a personal conference with Maharaja Sher Singh. However, the enmity of his men was no less than formerly, for no sooner did they hear of his presence in Lahore with Ventura, than they again besieged Ventura's house and were only driven off when he turned his guns upon them.

Ultimately Sher Singh who was very loath, in view of the treacherous folks around him, to lose any of the trust of the European Officers managed to patch up a peace for on the 9th of February 1842 we read that* :—

"The Maharaja has induced General Court's men to receive him at Peshawar, and he has returned to his division. But nothing will really reconcile him to them, after the treatment he has received from them; especially as this concession has been rung from them by concessions and supplications"

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* Punjab Records, Book No. 151, letter No. 49.

Though Court was with his men, he was decidedly not of them for they treated him with indifference or contempt. Nor was he alone for Colin Mackenzie remarked at this period that :—" The sons of the Khalsa have long since regarded subordination or obedience to orders as a weakness unworthy of them." As for Court in particular, under date the 9th of May 1842 we read that* :—

" The troops of the Durbar are very insubordinate and insolent. The battalions of Generals Court and Partap Singh are the very worst. Neither of these Officers though nominally in command have any influence whatever over their men."

Henry Lawrence in a letter written in response to an appeal from Court for testimony as to his character and service to the British at this period writes :—

" *June 1845.*—General Court has called upon me for testimony as to his service in the Khyber. He certainly was present at the head of his division on the day when entrance to the Khyber was forced, when the Sikhs having the left attack lost about 2,000 men killed and wounded. He had a double danger to contend with in the hatred of his men, inasmuch as he had just returned to his command after twelve months exile in British territory. On that occasion he took refuge with me at Ferozepur and for many months refused to return to his mutinous battalions, and not without cause, for they have savagely murdered one European Officer and ill-treated others.

" At Peshawar they almost daily insulted myself and Captain Mackeson and took Court to task for receiving visits from me. Under such circumstances General Court's personal influence must have been very small, but I have no reason to believe that it was used otherwise than on our behalf. Personally I have always found him a courteous and gentlemanlike person, and it was under protection of his division that I returned from Ali Masjid the day after the Khyber was carried."

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* Court's File, letter No. 198, *et seq.*

In June 1843 Court's Brigade scenting trouble at Lahore returned from the Frontier without permission and again distinguished itself by pre-eminence amongst the disorderly elements in the army. The authority of the officers, whether Indian or European, was set at naught except, curiously enough, when at exercise or on active service, in which latter cases the "Panches" in whom all authority was vested, insisted upon obedience, realising its necessity.

Such being the case the whole of the better class of the European Officers either resigned or took leave, leaving only a few of the lower class Europeans or Eurasians who being either deserters, or "domiciled by marriage," could not, or would not, quit the Punjab.

In September 1843 the assassination of Sher Singh warned Court that his own situation was precarious so without either resigning or asking for leave he again took refuge at Ferozepur. This action was most unfortunate, for Pandit Julla, then in supreme authority, took advantage of it to declare Court a deserter who by such action had forfeited his Jagirs, and supplemented this by further declaring that, as these Jagirs had been conferred on condition of military service, which by reason of his desertion Court could not now render, they were forfeited.

This ruling was wrong, for these Jagirs had been given as rewards for services rendered. However, the British Government, to whom Court appealed as heirs to the Khalsa, upheld the ruling and Court never received any compensation for the loss of his Jagirs. Nor was he any luckier concerning the additions to the Tomb he had lived in so long for, after his departure, the troops looted his house and later the buildings fell into ruin for want of occupation. Besides this the Government of India brought forward the evidence of an old Durbari to show that these additions and alterations had been carried out by Ranjit Singh at his own expense.

Apparently he had managed to collect his arrears for in all the correspondence he does not allude to any due to him. And, as for about sixteen years his pay averaged between Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 40,000 per annum, of which being of simple and abstemious habits he could scarcely have spent half, he must have left India a fairly wealthy man. On leaving India he took with him his second Kashmiri wife who had become a Christian and was married to her by the Catholic Archbishop of Marseilles in June 1844.

He died at Grasse in 1861.

The best educated of the four principal Frenchmen he was specially useful to Ranjit Singh as an Ordnance Officer. The guns he had so well made were equally well served by the Khalsa Artillery in the Sikh Wars of 1846—49 and proved most destructive to the British Army.

*Senor Oms.*

But for the tragic conclusion of his brief career, this unlucky person would certainly have risen high in the military service of Ranjit Singh and rivalled, if not excelled, the best of the four French Officers in rank. The estimation of the Maharaja he already held.

His name has been variously set down as Amise, Musa Sahib, Ums, Hommus and Oms. The latter was his real name, the variations being due to phonetic spelling, or Asiatic mispronunciations. His nationality was also in doubt for, though he described himself as a Southern Frenchman, he was really a Spaniard, this assumption, for the moment, of French nationality being probably to ingratiate himself with the Maharaja who, he knew, had much regard for French Officers.

Owing to his brief career, the Punjab records and contemporary books have very little to say about him. Indeed the former only mention his death, and we are mostly indebted to Doctor Murray and Captain Wade for details of the career of Oms before he entered the service

of Ranjit Singh. We learn from Court's Itinerary* that Oms quitted the Persian service in 1824 in order to make his way to the Punjab with the object of obtaining military service with Ranjit Singh. At the outset of his journey misfortune befell him for he was taken prisoner by the Governor of Birdjan and only escaped just before the arrival of Court at the castle of Fourk about July or August 1826.

Court does not mention how Oms managed to get away, but as he was able to display himself to Captain Wade and the Maharaja in a military uniform, he must have been released and permitted to take away his effects. He arrived at Lahore only a few days before Avitabile and Court, and from this point we cannot do better than quote from Dr. Murray's letters which commence with the arrival of Oms at Lahore.

†" The Raja told me that another Officer had arrived at his Court to-day and wished to enter his service, that he said he was a Frenchman, but he had some doubts on the subject. I asked if it was one of the gentlemen who had been stopped by Yar Mohammad Khan. He said 'No' that this person professed to come from Iran and that owing to the disturbed state at Kabul and the neighbourhood he had taken a more southerly route and arrived by Baluchistan and Multan.

" The officer now made his appearance, and the Raja desired me to converse with him in French and ascertain who and what he was. He appeared about thirty-seven or thirty years of age, was dressed in a blue coat with red facing and ponderous gold epaulettes, a white waistcoat and very loose red satin trousers. He wore his beard long, and very much sunburnt, and had a small black cap on his head made of the skin of a lamb with the wool outermost. I spoke to him in French and mentioned the Maharaja's wish (to know more about him) He said his name was Ums, that he was a Frenchman born in the south of France, that he had entered the Artillery at

* Court's Itinerary, page 4.

† Murray's letters, No. 5, Volume 21, Range 125.

an early age and served in several of Napoleon's Campaigns.

"I asked him what rank he had attained and what was his last campaign. He said that he was first Lieut. of the Artillery under King Joachim in the Russian Campaign, but was made Captain before its termination. He said he had his brevet with him. I explained this conversation to the Maharaja who was pleased to find that he had been always in the Artillery, and bade me ask him if he was acquainted with Artillery tactics......The Raja asked me in a low tone if I thought he was really a Frenchman. I replied that I did, that he spoke the language well, and that what he had mentioned about the campaigns in which he had served and the General under whom he had been was consistent with the history of the times.

"The Raja wished to know if he had been invited here by the other French Officers. He said no. He was acquainted a little with M. Ventura whom he had seen some years ago at Constantinople and of whom he had also heard in Persia. He said he had been in the service of the King of Persia for some years......He was going on to relate why he left that service and the route by which he reached India when the Maharaja rose from his chair......I have no doubt but he will take him into his service......I understand from other quarters that M. Ums has represented himself to the Raja as well versed in the casting of cannon, and that the latter has offered him Rs. 25 a day with the promise of an increase if his services are approved of. This offer, however, has not been accepted. He insists on having Rs. 20,000 a year, the allowance he had from the King of Persia. To this the Raja objects and no arrangement has yet been made."

Captain Wade continues the story and incidentally shows the jealousy prevailing amongst these adventurers* :—

"I observed a European standing near the Raja who appeared to be M. Oms, a Spaniard, who had lately entered his service. After some time the Raja directing my attention to Mr. Oms said that he had lately arrived there

* Wade's letters, No. 3, Volume 33, Range 125, paragraph 49.

and seemed well versed in military affairs. The other French Officers will not associate with him. There is some difference between them concerning each other's merits......

"*The Raja spoke of the two French Officers who had lately arrived at his Court. He said they had come from Persia by Kandahar and Kabul, that their names were Messrs. Court and Avitabile, that M. Oms had known them in the service of the King of Persia, but since their arrival they had disclaimed all knowledge of him. The Hon'ble Captain Keppel in the account of his travels through Persia to Europe mentions having resided some days with M. Court at Kerman Shah when M. Oms was there. He relates an occurrence affecting M. Oms which accounts in some measure for the disinclination of the French Officers to associate with him.........

"†On the morning of the 10th the two battalions commanded by M. Oms were paraded and went through several evolutions. The Raja said that M. Oms was indefatigable in dealing with his corps to which I can bear witness having seen them at drill morning and evening till a very late hour......When the battalions had marched away, the Raja said, M. Oms is well versed in the drill of a corps but knows nothing else. Messrs. Allard and Ventura, on the contrary, are intelligent and conversant with all subjects especially the art of diplomacy."

Not being able to consult Keppel's book we cannot say what was the incident referred to, as apparently discreditable to Oms, but in any case, it did not affect his ability as a soldier, nor did the deficiency of diplomacy, affect the Raja's valuation of Oms whom he engaged on a salary of Rs. 1,200 per month, an amount comparing very favourably with the Rs. 500 awarded to Court and Avitabile as starting pay.

From the commencement his zeal and energy earned him the high opinion of his employer who quickly increased the two battalions first placed under Oms to five and a regiment of cavalry. To these troops were allotted

* Wade's letters, No. 3, Volume 33, Range 125, paragraph 63.
† Wade's letters, No. 3, Volume 33, Range 125, paragraph 74.

the quadrangles of Jahangir's Tomb as quarters, and to Oms himself the Badshahi Mosque as a residence. He does not appear to have lived in the mosque but to have taken up his quarters in the Tomb of Jahangir itself, for, it was in this, and it is said on the grave of Jahangir, that he died.

In 1828 the "Campo" of Oms was sent to Kangra on active service and returned from thence in August 1828. Very soon after the end came, for Sohan Lal records, that* :—

"Musa Sahib died of cholera in September 1828. On his death Ranjit Singh gave orders that he should be buried with the greatest honours, and sent several of his High Court officials to attend the funeral, which was given with all Military honours in the English fashion. He was buried within the precincts of the mausoleum, which was then bricked up."

Masson, who arrived in Lahore about the time of death of Oms, gives the following account† :—

"The Maharaja gave over the Shahdara enclosure to a French Officer, M. Amise, who caused the chambers to be cleared of accumulated filth, and put the surrounding gardens in order. Just after this he suddenly died. The Mussalmans did not fail to attribute his death to his temerity and impiety in occupying so sacred a place, and they said that the shade of the Emperor actually appeared to him, and announced his death as the punishment for the crime. Whether the Maharaja credited this tale I know not, but he much regretted M. Amise's death, and ordered the buildings to be closed up and the entrance walled in."

Sir Edward Maclagan informs us that many years ago he was shown the place where Oms was buried by some survivors of the period, but that they refused to give the details of his death and the desecration of the tomb affirming that they were very bad indeed. What really

* Court: Diary of date.

† Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume I, page 360.

happened appears to have been that the unfortunate man was taken ill with choleraic pains and the internal disturbances attendant upon this awful disease caused the defilements the Mullahs spoke of with such horror. Captain Wade thus pays a final tribute to Oms*.

" *18th of October 1828.*—To-day information reached me of the death of Senor Oms, one of the principal officers in the Maharaja's service. He came to Lahore about two years ago. He was by birth a Spaniard, and previous to his arrival at Lahore, was in the Persian service. He was considered by the Maharaja a most laborious and zealous officer, and rose in a short time from the command of a single battalion to that of a brigade of five battalions. In organisation and discipline he was indefatigable."

*Colonel F. E. Mevins,*
or
*Baron de Mevius.*

This individual whose name is spelt Mevins in the Punjab Records was an adventurer in the most dubious meaning of the word.

Our acquaintance with him commences on the 12th January 1827, when the Resident at Ludhiana reports to Delhi† that " Mr. Frank Ernest Mevins has arrived at Ludhiana from Ghazipore, with the intention of seeking military service in the Punjab, and that in accordance with the rule prohibiting such persons from crossing the Sutlej, he has detained Mr. Mevins for orders. Mr. Mevins was of German birth."

In March 1827, permission was accorded for Mr. Mevins to proceed to Lahore, he having obtained a promise of employment from Ranjit Singh, and signed the pledge that he would " during his period of service, abstain from eating beef, smoking, or shaving, would domesticate himself in the country by marriage, would never quit the service without formal permission from the

* Punjab Records, Book No. 96, letter No. 158.
† Punjab Records, Book No. 95, letter No. 23.

Maharajah, and would engage to fight any nation with whom the Maharajah declared war, even should it be his own*."

Mevins, who either assumed, or resumed the title of Baron, is shown in the Khalsa rolls as Baron de Mevius, and was apparently a man of considerable ability in his profession for his commencing salary was fixed at Rs. 800 per month, a sum greater than that paid to the French Officers as commencing salary. Though a German, he instructed his troops on the English system, probably having served in one of the many foreign recruited units such as the Chasseurs Brittaniques, the Regiment de Rolles, or de Meuron, which, up to about 1818, had served the British; for in all these Germans were fairly numerous.

If his system was English, his methods were Prussian, and it was these latter that caused his dismissal from the service under circumstances related by Jacquemont† :—

"*July 1830.*—Ranjit Singh only half relies on his European Officers. M. Mevius, having lately excited a revolt in his corps by the Prussian process of applying the whip to the Sikhs, was compelled to take refuge in the tent of the Maharajah himself to save his life from his men. Ranjit Singh saved his life, but refused to retain him in his service. Upon this high words passed between both sides, and at last, Ranjit Singh dismissing Mevius with a very expressive Hindustani oath, exclaimed, 'German, French or English, all these European rascals are alike.'"

The newswriter at Ludhiana reports‡ :—

"*21st March 1830.*—M. Mevius arrived here to-day, attended by an escort with orders to put him across the Sutlej. The cause of his dismissal was due to the existence of disaffection in the corps of infantry he commanded. It is his intention to proceed to Bahawalpore, and thence to Peshawar, and establish himself in service there, thus inducing the Maharajah to recall him. I do not think he will succeed in either scheme."

* Punjab Records, Book No. 95, letter No. 83.

† Letters from India, Volume I, page 231.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 98, letter No. 44.

Neither did he.

A sidelight on the man's character is given in the following letter written to Mevius by Captain Wade, in his capacity as Magistrate of Ludhiana* :—

"*23rd April 1830.*—To M. Mevius. A complaint has been preferred before me that a female named Bekli has been detained by you and sold to a professional woman for Rs. 200. I deem it my duty to inform you that the alleged proceeding is contrary to the laws of the British Government. The female in question is stated to have been detained by you, and her personal liberty has been claimed by her brother. I request you will release her, or assign your objection to a non-compliance with my application."

Having settled this matter by the release of the woman, whom Mevius alleged he had sold as compensation for the theft of gold buttons worth Rs. 300 by her brother, Mevius was directed to quit Ludhiana, and make for the nearest seaport. Though leaving Ludhiana he only did so to recross the Sutlej and return to Lahore with the object of making peace with Ranjit Singh, and reinstatement.

In both he failed for Ranjit Singh had him again forcibly deported, this time with the warning that should he again obtrude himself at Lahore, shorter and sterner steps might be taken to remove his unwelcome presence. Mevius explained to Captain Wade that his intention in going to Lahore was merely to procure a certificate of service from Ranjit Singh and accepting the explanation Wade permitted Mevius to remain at Ludhiana† until he himself could procure the desired certificate, which ran :—

"*Lahore, 11th April 1830*‡.—M. Mevins, a native of Germany, passed into the Punjab in March, 1827 and entered the service of Ranjit Singh. During the three

* Punjab Records, Book No. 98, letter No. 51.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 98, letter No. 61.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 137, letter No. 26.

years that he endured in that service, he raised and held command of a battalion of Infantry which he had disciplined according to the methods of the British. He was employed on active service on several occasions."

Being again out of employment Mevins went on to Kabul *viâ* Kandahar. Failing to obtain service at Kabul, he set out to return to Europe overland, apparently with the intention of seeking service in the Russian army where a number of German Officers was already employed. Being a man of resource and few, if any, scruples Mevins bethought himself of a new way to pay old debts and also travel in comfort, so, utilising the certificate obtained from Ranjit Singh and forging other credentials he obtained credit by passing himself of as an envoy from Ranjit Singh to the Czar of Russia.

He had the impudence to report his arrival at Teheran to Ranjit Singh and presentation to the Shah of Persia as his envoy. The letter was signed C. F. Smith, on behalf of Mevins. Infuriated at the letter and the man's audacity Ranjit Singh sent the letter to Captain Wade with the request that the Government of India should write direct to St. Petersburg, and expose Mevins as an imposter*. On this letter being examined at Calcutta, the signature was identified as that of a person who some years before had undergone a term of imprisonment in the Calcutta Jail for coining false money, and it was assumed that Smith and Mevins were identical persons.

An extract from the Adventurers in the Punjab gives us another instance of the manner in which Mevins succeeded in raising funds† :—

" A Jew of Meshed was lately applied to by a European, who said he was an Englishman travelling with despatches to St. Petersburg, and asked for a loan of 500 ducats (£250), which he gave. It turned out that the rogue was a Prussian, who however, had the honesty to

* Punjab Records, Book No. 115, letter No. 94.

† Adventurers in the Punjab, page 59.

write to the Charge D'Affaires at Teheran, and ask him to honour the bill for the credit of his countryman. Asked why he gave the money, the Jew said he had learnt to rely upon the word of an Englishman."

Whether the trustful Jew was ever paid does not transpire, but for his trust in the word of even a fictitious Englishman he deserved to be. As for the rascal who imposed upon him probably he received the reward usually paid to such peculiar gifts as he possessed.

*Colonel John Holmes.*

A short distance from the left of the inner archway of the Taksali Gate Cemetery at Lahore lies a pitiful little brick tomb a couple of feet square and a single brick high, bearing, on a tiny marble slab, this roughly cut inscription :—

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
HANNAH STEVENS,
MOTHER OF COLONEL JOHN HOLMES.
SIKH SERVICE.
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE NOVEMBER 5TH,
1848.
AGED 87 YEARS.

This humble memorial, but recently revealed by the clearing of the old graves is, then, the only memorial of that fine old Eurasian soldier of fortune, whom John Lawrence characterised* as " a most respectable old officer and worthy servant of the Khalsa Durbar†," whose headless body lies far away in Grave No. 1 of the Bannu Cemetery.

John Holmes, being of mixed descent, started his military career as a trumpeter in the Bengal Horse Artillery, that capacity being the only military appointment

* Punjab Records, No. 246/1669, 4/10/48.

† Monumental Inscriptions in the Punjab, page 3.

open to men or boys of mixed descent after 1780. The revolts of the West Indian negroes in the French possessions, and the atrocities committed upon the French colonists by mulattoes and quadroons, alarmed the Government of India as to the possibility of a similar outbreak, led by half-castes; so they prohibited the admission of any to a military career, till then open to them in the Company's forces.

As with most of the English adventurers who served the Company prior to entering other services, Holmes omitted, what he probably considered the mere formality of asking leave, when in September 1829, he cast his trumpet aside and left Ludhiana and " Colonel Faithful's Brigade of Artillery " to steal across the Sutlej and ultimately become a Colonel in Ranjit Singh's service, an elevation probably more dreamt of than thought possible.

The moment of his arrival was fortunate, coinciding as it did with a vacancy in the battalion lately commanded by Mevius, to which Ranjit Singh appointed him on a salary of Rs. 150 per mensem, this being then the maximum for men who had not served as *officers* in other armies*.

He remained in military service until 1835, when Ranjit Singh appointed him kardar of Gujrat, in succession to Harlan just dismissed with ignominy. It is indeed curious to note that Holmes, on both occasions, succeeded men who had been summarily dismissed. Of how he performed his duties in that capacity there is nothing on record, nor why he left it, for two years later he was back again with his battalion, to which was now added what was unusual with Europeans or semi-Europeans, in Ranjit Singh's service, a battery of artillery.

Of his war services, we have no exact record, but he was certainly present at the taking of Peshawar in 1834,

* Khalsa Durbar Records, Volume I, page 72.

at the Battle of Jumrood in 1837, with Ventura in the hill campaigns of 1840-41, and associated with the British in the forcing of the Khyber in 1842. Probably the spaces were filled in with lesser services, for then, as now, the Frontier was always to be depended upon for fighting.

He escaped being interfered with by the mutinous troops in Kulu, after the accession of Sher Singh, though Foulkes was murdered, and Mouton threatened in the next camp. It may have been that his mixed descent made him less disliked than the pure European, or that he was more patient with his troops. In May 1842, he wrote a letter from Peshawar to Henry Lawrence, warning him that the Sikh troops were ready at any moment to turn against the British, and offering the services of his own brigade, consisting of two battalions, a battery, and five hundred ghorchars (should they be needed) against his comrades*. In this letter he remarks that his heart and soul are bound up with his native country and its interests, and that having perfect control over his men they will follow him anywhere.

It is more than probable that this letter was instrumental in retaining Holmes in the Durbar service after most of the Europeans had been dismissed from it under the provisions of the Treaty. Owing to his permanent station being in the Hazara hills, Holmes escaped any entanglement in the anarchy, and also participation in the First Sikh War, which was really fought by the troops south of the Ravi, the Second being by those north of it.

As under the provisions of the Treaty the financial and general conditions of the Punjab were to be investigated by the British, and the superfluous troops disbanded, a certain number of Political Officers were slected and appointed. This duty being very dangerous each had as an escort a brigade, or battalion of selected Durbar soldiers who, if possible, were to be under the command of a European officer or have such associated with them,

* Punjab Records, Book No. 41, letter No. 101.

and for this duty the troops of van Cortlandt and Holmes were deputed.

These Political Officers were of a stamp widely differing from those who so angered and disgusted Masson and General Nott, and from those he served under Holmes earned favourable mention. Of such were Edwardes, Taylor, Abbott, George Lawrence, and Lumsden. That of Edwardes was especially valuable for he was a man whose standard was high, and exacting. He writes* :—

" I have always received the greatest assistance from Colonel John Holmes, and to his energy, and ability, I am indebted for the forcing of the Kohat Thal."

Abbott, and Taylor both corroborate this in various official letters as does Lawrence who especially commented on the admirable condition, and discipline of the troops under Holmes in the Bannu district. But it is to Edwardes that we are indebted for a personal description of Holmes and his peculiarities.

†John Holmes, or John Holmes, Sahib, as he was called by the natives, was a half-caste who had served the Company as a musician, the only career in that open to such as he, but had early left it and carried his knowledge of drill across the Sutlej, where he rose to the rank of colonel, and now commanded two battalions. He talked English, and did his duty well. He also professed to be a Christian but there was some excuse for my not knowing that for he lived as a Mussalman, as probably his father before him, for, in a petition for family pension after his death, there was set down, if I remember rightly, the extraordinary item of three mothers and two wives.

This was quite consistent with the habits of the Indian soldiers amongst whom he lived, and was obnoxious to neither so long as he was not known to be a Christian. I objected to including him amongst the congregation at

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* Political Diaries, Volume IV, page 436.

† A Year on the Punjab Frontier, pages 297-300.

our services, but yielded to Taylor's representations when he said " What chance is there of his becoming better if we give him no opportunity."

This description is typical of many of the adventurers in Indian services, high, and low. Religious observances, or religion itself sat very lightly on men who had voluntarily cut themselves off from their country and kin. Indeed, had it been otherwise, they would have met a speedy end from a Sikh Akali, or Mussalman Ghazi, both of whom would have considered it a most meritorious deed to thus dispose of a kafir, or unbeliever. The plurality of wives may be correct, but for mothers, we should read mothers-in-law for we have the testimony of Hannah Stevens' gravestone to show that she was really his mother. The difference in name is easily accounted for as in those days soldiers' wives soon re-married. In fact it was an old gibe that new partners were usually arranged for before the old ones were underground, or immediately after.

We find another appreciation of Holmes in a letter from Taylor, dated July 1848. It runs :—

" I may mention that in Colonel John Holmes I have found a most active, and intelligent assistant, who is heart and soul in our interests. I have received from him an account of his suppression of the mutiny amongst the Sikh troops, who intended to murder all their officers (and myself) and then march off to Multan with their guns. I have detached the most loyal battalion which Colonel Holmes wished to proceed with, but I detained him. I consoled him by pointing out that it was his duty to remain with me; in which view, he, like the good soldier he is, acquiesced."

The truth was that matters were fast hastening towards another Sikh War. The Khalsa soldiery whose pay, privileges, and especially numbers had been drastically cut by the British influence were in a state of smoulder, fanned by their sirdars to whom the British influence was

equally obnoxious. They were convinced that they had not been fairly beaten, and as is usual in such cases quite anxious to have another trial of strength.

As often happens in India those in high places were careless of, or could not realise that the danger was imminent. Even the outbreak at Multan was treated as a sporadic case. This indifference was very dangerous to men in isolated positions with the Durbar troops, and especially Holmes, who, by his stern suppression of mutinies, and disturbances, together with his known sympathy with the British had become obnoxious to his men.

The fate of Kanara similarly situated was a stern warning but despite it, this sturdy old soldier kept his men in control, and obeyed the orders received from the Political Officer, George Lawrence. Holmes was warned that the local Panch had condemned him to death, but even so he would not take shelter within the newly built fort of Dhulipgarh, which was garrisoned by loyal Mussalman levies under Fateh Khan, Tiwana, but remained, with his men, trusting to their loyalty to one who had led them for many years.

It was a vain trust for these very men, though they would not kill him themselves, had no objection to others doing so and treachery making the task easy the end came on the 4th October 1848.

The Resident at Lahore reports* :—

" With great regret I have to announce that the Sikh troops at Bannu have mutinied and murdered their commander Colonel John Holmes the last European attached to the Sikh Army. His tent was pitched in the midst of his camp, and guarded by double sentries, but at midnight a large body of Sikhs entered the tent with the connivance of the sentries and having shot the Colonel cut off his head."

* Punjab Records, No. 246/1669, 4/10/48.

He also adds :—

" Colonel John Holmes was a most respectable old officer who had long served the Khalsa Army."

The family ultimately were awarded a pension totalling about Rs. 250 per month, this ceasing with the death of the immediate recipients. Some of his descendants still live in Lahore.

## CHAPTER X.

### CHARLES MASSON, TRAVELLER, GEOGRAPHER, ARCHAEOLOGIST, NUMISMATIST.

"In the autumn of 1826, having traversed the Rajput states and the arid wastes of Bikanir, I entered the desert frontiers of Bahawalpur. During the whole of my 600 mile journey, I had been most civilly and kindly treated by the natives of the country through which I had passed*."

Thus abruptly, and without vouchsafing any prefatory information as to who or what he was, whence and why he came, or whither and on what errand bound, does Masson commence his simply told, though astonishing, narrative of twelve years almost solitary wanderings, poor and penniless, through Baluchistan, Sindh, Afghanistan, Persia and the Punjab.

In this year of grace 1928, when racial feeling is so accentuated and embittered, and Englishmen viewed with suspicion, it is difficult to credit that up to less than 100 years ago, even the poorest and most solitary of Englishmen could wander, almost unmolested, and more often received as a welcome guest, through the wildest and most savage parts of Asia and India. Yet such was the case, not only with Masson, but with many other obscure adventurers of the period, some of whom traversed the immense distance between Europe and Asia alone, poor and on foot, as did Tom Coryat, the "Odcombian Oddity," some 200 years before, and George Thomas from Madras to Delhi in 1787.

But these men had a definite goal, and, to attain it as speedily as possible, kept to the more beaten tracks, whereas Masson wandered hither and thither, returning on his tracks again and again, but *always* gathering much

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* Masson's Travels in Baluchistan, etc., Volume I, page 1.

curious lore, especially archæological and numismatical, the latter proving the existence of long forgotten races and dynasties in northern Afghanistan, and illuminating or rescuing their history from the mists of oblivion.

Of the latter, much will be found in the journals of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, and especially in the *Ariana Antiqua*—a large volume compiled from Masson's researches by an eminent Orientalist of the period, Professor H. H. Wilson, and published by the East India Company at their own expense. The illustrations are all by Masson himself, and show him as, not only a draughtsman but, an artist of considerable merit.

He was besides this a French and Latin linguist, and conversant with ancient Greek. His knowledge of the latter is shown by the fact that his recognition of archaic Greek letters on certain ancient coins, found by him, enabled Prinsep to decipher the Pehlavian inscriptions upon them, and thus reveal the history of the dynasties under whom they had been coined*.

Regarding the man himself we shall, before augmenting his known history with hitherto unpublished details gleaned from the Government Records, quote from Sir Thomas Holdich's book, entitled, "The Gates of India." In this book Sir Thomas, writing 60 years after Masson's death, knowing nothing of him personally, and believing him to be an American, gives a most appreciative summary of the traveller's experiences, and records, and their value.

He devotes several chapters to Masson, then (1910) forgotten by all but a few delvers into the musty and neglected shelves of old libraries, and his writings are so admirably descriptive that we, at any rate, cannot improve upon them, and this must be our excuse for drawing upon Sir Thomas Holdich at length. He writes† :—

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*** Calcutta Review, Volume XV, page 442.**

**† Gates of India, page 345, *et seq.***

"Before Indian administrators had seriously turned their attention to the Afghan buffer-land and set to work to fill up 'intelligence' material at secondhand, there was at least one active European agent in the field who was in direct touch with the chief political actors in that strange land of everlasting unrest, and who has left behind him a record which is unsurpassed on the Indian frontier for the width of its scope of inquiry into matters political, social, economic, and scientific, and the general accuracy of his conclusions.

"This was the American Masson. It must be remembered that the Punjab and Sindh were almost as *terra incognita* to us in 1830 as was Afghanistan. The approach to the latter country was through foreign territory. The Sikh chiefs of the Punjab and the Amirs of Sindh were *not then necessarily hostile to British interests.* They watched, no doubt, the gradual extension of the red line of our maps towards the north-west and west, and were fully alive to the probability that, so far as regarded their own countries, they would all soon be painted red.

"But there was no official discourtesy or intoleration shown towards European travellers, and in the Sikh-governed Punjab, at any rate, much of the military control of the most military nationality was in the hands of European leaders. Nor do we find much of the *spirit of fanatical hatred to the Feringhi even in Afghanistan at that time.* The European came and went, and it was only due to the disturbed state of the country, and the local absence of law and order that he ran any risk of serious misadventure.

"In these days it would be impossible for any European to travel as Masson or Ferrier (a French traveller and *ex*-officer) travelled in Afghanistan, but in those days there was something to be gained by friendship with England, and the weakness of our support was hardly suspected until it was disclosed by the results of the first Afghan War. So Masson and Ferrier assumed the rôle of Afghan travellers, clothed in Afghan garments, but more or less ignorant of the Afghan language, living with the people, partaking of their hospitality, studying their ways, joining their pursuits, discussing their politics, and

placing themselves on terms of familiarity, if not of intimacy, with their many hosts in a way which has never been imitated since.

"No one now ever assumes the dress of the Afghan and lives with him. No one joins a caravan and sits over the nightly fire discussing bazaar prices or the character of a chief............Consequently there is a peculiar value in the records of such a traveller as Masson. They are in many ways as valuable now (1910) as they were eighty years ago for the character of the Afghan *has not changed with his history or his politics.* To some extent they are even more valuable, for it is inevitable that the story of a long travel through an unknown and unimagined world should be received with a certain amount of reservation until later experience confirms the tale and verifies localities.

"Fifty years elapsed before the footsteps of Masson could be traced with certainty. Not till the conclusion of the last Afghan War, and the final re-shaping of the surveys of Baluchistan, could it be said exactly where he wandered during those strenuous years of unremitting travel. And now that we can take his story in detail, and follow him stage by stage through the Indian borderlands we can only say that, considering the circumstances under which his observations were taken and recorded, it is marvellously accurate in geographical detail.

"Masson was in the field before Burnes. In the month of September 1830, the Resident in the Persian Gulf writes to the Chief Secretary to the Government of India, that 'an American gentleman of the name of Masson' arrived at Bushire from Bassadore on the 13th June last,' and that he described himself as belonging to the state of Kentucky, having been absent for ten years from his country, 'which he must consequently have left when he was young, as he is now only about two-and-thirty years of age.' The same letter says that previous to the breaking out of the war between Russia and Persia in 1826, Masson 'appears to have visited Khorassan from Tiflis, by way of Meshed and Herat, making no effort to conceal his European origin,' and that from Herat he went to Kandahar, Shikarpur, and Sind.

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"In his book (Travels in Afghanistan, Baluchistan, the Punjab, and Kelat, 1841) Masson opens his story with the autumn of 1826, when he was in Bahawalpur and Sind, which he had approached through Rajputana and not from Afghanistan. From Bahawalpur he passed on to Peshawar and Kabul, from Kabul to Kandahar, and thence to Shikarpur, entering Afghanistan, knowing nothing of the Pashtu language. We will follow the text of his own narrative, and surely no narrative of adventure that has ever appeared before or since in connection with Afghan exploration can rival it for interest.

"It is a curious story for anyone who has travelled in the Khyber in these later days to read. A European with a most limited knowledge of Pashtu, tramping the road in company with a Pathan (like himself, a mendicant) picking up information every yard of the way, keenly interested in his rough surroundings, taking count of the ragged groups of stone-built huts clinging to the hill-sides or massed around a central citadel in the open plain, with here and there a disintegrating monument crowning the hill-top with a cupola or dome, the like of which he had never seen before.

"Masson had hardly realised in these early days that he was on one of the routes most sacred to pilgrimage of all those known to the disciples of Buddha, and it was not till later years that he set about a systematic exploration of the extraordinary wealth of Buddhist relics which lie about Jalalabad and the valleys adjoining the Khyber route to Kabul. On his journey he made his way with the varied incidents of adventure common to the time, robbed at one place, treated with hospitality at another, sitting under the mulberry trees discussing politics with all the energy of the true Afghan (who is never deficient in the power of expressing his political sentiments) and taking it altogether, enjoying a close, if not absolutely friendly, intimacy with the half-savage people of those wholly savage hills. An intimacy, such as no other educated European has ever attained, and which tells a tale of a totally different attitude on the part of the Afghan towards the European than to that which has existed since.

"Nothing seems to have come amiss to his (Masson's) inquiring mind. Archæology, numismatics, botany,

geology, and history............it was all new, and an inexhaustible opportunity lay before him. He certainly made good use of it, busying himself amongst other things with an enquiry into the origin of the Siahposh Kafirs!

"Masson's observations in this troublous corner of Asiatic geography (Afghanistan and Khorassan) are shrewd and interesting, and as much to the purpose to-day as they were when they were written.........Masson made his way steadily to Kabul, thence to Ghuznee, and then to Kandahar.........The route is described with surprising exactitude, and it has only lately been possible to verify step by step the road he travelled. He could hardly have carried about volumes of notes with him, and it might well have happened that he dislocated his topography or ethnography from lapse of memory.

"But he does neither; and the most amazing feature of Masson's tales of travel is that in all essential features we knew little more about the country of the Afghans after the last war than he could have told us before the first.........By the desolate plain of Dasht-i-Badoulat and the Bolan Pass Masson trod the well-known route to Dadar and Shikarpur. He lived a strange life in those days. No one since his time has rubbed shoulders with Afghan and Baluch, intimately associating himself with all their simple and savage ways, reckoning every man he met on the road a robber till he had proved himself a friend.

"Absolutely penniless, yet still meeting with rough hospitality and real kindness now and then, and ever absorbing with a most marvellous power of digestion all that was useful in the way of information, whether it concerned the red-hot, sand-strewn plains, or the vermin-covered thieves and outcasts that disgraced them. It was quite as often with the lowest of the gang as with the leaders that he found himself most intimately associated...

"The vicissitudes of this weary walk were many...... From Rohri on the Indus he made his way almost exactly along the line of the present railway, through Bahawalpur to Uch, continually losing his way in the narrow tracks that intersected the intricate jungle with but a rupee or two in his pocket, and nothing but the saving grace of the

village masjid as a refuge for the night. His experiences with wayfarers like himself, the lies that he heard, the hospitality which he received both from men and women, and the variety of incident generally which adorns this part of Masson's tale is a refreshing contrast to the dreary monotony of the modern traveller's tale of Indian travel.

"At Fazilpur (in Bahawalpur) he found an old friend, one Rahmat Khan, and was once again in the lap of native luxury. Clean clothes, a bed to lie on, and good food, kept him idle for a month before he started again northward for Lahore. Rahmat Khan was almost too generous. He spent his last rupee recklessly on a nautch, and had to borrow from the Hindus of his bazaar in order to find two rupees to present to his guest for the cost of his journey to Lahore. Of this large sum it is interesting to note that Masson had still eight annas left in his pocket on his arrival at that city.

"Alas for the good old days! What a modern tramp might achieve in India if he were allowed free play it is difficult to guess, but never again will any European travel 360 miles in India and feed himself on a rupee and a half..............Masson left Lahore after the rainy season and made his way south to Karachi, *viâ* Multan, Hyderabad and Tatta. His explorations conducted from Karachi are sufficiently remarkable in themselves to place him quite at the head of frontier explorers.

"He first made a sea trip in Arab crafts up the Persian Gulf, visiting Muscat, and obtaining a passage in a Company's cruiser to Bushire. From thence he went to Tabriz and up the Tigris to Baghdad and Basra, thence to Muscat, and finally returning to Karachi in an Arab vessel.

"The story of Masson's next journey through Las Bela and Eastern Baluchistan to Kalat and the neighbourhood of Quetta must have been an almost unintelligible record for half a century after it was written. It is almost useless to repeat the names of the places he visited. Five and twenty years after these names were absolutely unfamiliar, an empty sound signifying nothing to the dwellers on the British side of the Baluch frontier.

"Gradually they have emerged from the regions of the vague unknown into the ordered series of completed maps ; and nothing testifies more surely to the general accuracy of Masson's narrative than the possibility which now exists of tracing his steps from point to point, through these wild and desolate regions of rocky ridge and salt-edged jungle in Eastern Baluchistan.

"Had Masson's information been properly digested, the most direct route to Kalat, Quetta, or Kandahar, *viâ* the Purali River, would surely have been weighed in administrative councils, and the advantage of direct communication with the seaport by a cheaply constructed line would have received due consideration. But Masson's work was still unproven, and unchecked, and it would have been more than any Englishman's life was worth to have attempted in 1880 the task which he undertook with such light-hearted energy."

Here, let us leave the well ordered pages of Sir Thomas Holdich's narrative for the scattered folios of the Punjab Records, and the voluminous pages of Masson's volumes. He does not figure in Government Records until 1832, for though the watch kept on Europeans in northern India was keen, Masson's wanderings were so remote, and obscure that, until his visit to Persia, no one was aware of his existence. Hence, up to that date we must fill in the gap with extracts from Masson's own book.

From Bahawalpur frontiers we will follow him and his companion, for though for reasons which will be obvious later, he does not mention this fact, he had one. The two stopped at Bahawalpur some time, being hospitably treated by the Nawab, who offered Masson the command of his ragamuffin army, just vacated by the death of another European* named Bura Sahib (Burrows or Brown). Declining the honour, Masson and Potter tramped away, their journey heartened by a donation of three handfuls of rupees, ordered by the Nawab.

The Bakhshi's hands must have been singularly sticky, or small, for all that reached Masson was about sixty. In

* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume I, page 8.

the wake of the Bahawalpur army, then setting out on one of the forays dignified by the title of tax-gathering, the tramps leisurely drifted to Dera Ghazi Khan, arriving there about December 1826. Here they parted, Potter for Lahore, where he entered the service of Gulab Singh, and Masson to drift through the unknown hinterland, subsisting on the charity of the inhabitants.

He had a wonderful knack of accommodating himself to all classes, creeds, and races, and usually managed to find a travelling companion, mostly of the fakir or beggar class, who imparted their peculiar, and useful, knowledge to him. He never attempted to conceal his nationality, which indeed, as he knew but little Hindustani, and no Pashtu, would have been useless. Nor did its avowal do him any harm, as in this typical instance* :—

"During the Ramzan I strolled out from Dera Ghazi Khan to a grove of *ber* trees. Finding them in fruit, I endeavoured to bring some down by casting sticks and stones, when a woman, observing me, pulled a big stick from a hedge and without mercy employed it on me, reviling me the while as an infidel for breaking my fast. Expostulation seemed but to increase her fury, and I was perplexed as to how to act, for it would be awkward to return violence. Presently I said, 'Why be angry; I am a Feringhi,' when she dropped her weapon, expressed great sorrow at the mistake, and helped me to bring down the fruit."

News of his existence spread with that rapidity so puzzling to Europeans, so, as Masson travelled very slowly, he usually found himself on arrival fairly well known by repute, and an object of benevolent curiosity from people, whose hospitality was well repaid by stories of the outside world, and personal contact with a member of a race so much heard of, and so little known. For months he wandered backwards and forwards, and, as illustrating how Europeans were treated in those days and places, we will quote more typical examples† :—

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* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, Volume I, page 63.

† Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, Volume I, pages 80-81.

"Placing my trust in divine providence, I entered Mewat. A sharp rain was falling and I took shelter under a bush until evening fell, when I left the tree, and entering a village, sat down amongst a company of men seated under a small shed. One of them conversed with me and questioned me as to my country and religion. On my answer, 'A European and a Christian,' he informed his comrades that Hasrat Isa (Jesus Christ) was an *asl* (genuine) Pathan, and any disciple of His must be a worthy man. The best entertainment in the village was now provided for me, and my questioner, who proved to be a Sayad, busied himself in providing me with food, a warm place to sleep in, and plenty of coverings..................................

"Near Kundu I was met by an armed man, who drew his sword and was about to sacrifice me as an infidel Sikh. Very hastily I informed him that I was a Feringhi, upon which he put away his sword and conducted me to a village near at hand, where I was hospitably entertained............ Near Ghuznee a band of robbers surrounded me with the intention of robbery and violence, but on finding I was a Feringhi, led me to their village and hospitably entertained me on bread and buttermilk*."

Progressing slowly, for time was absolutely no object, and his legs the only means of motion, Masson arrived at Peshawar in company with an Afghan sirdar, who entertained him in his house, until the wanderlust again became too powerful. Presently, in company with an equally penniless, and vagabond Pathan, Masson set out for Kabul. The united possession of the two amounted to a handful of *chuppatis*, a cotton wrap, a knife, and an earthen vessel, at the bottom of which there was concealed under some muddy water a treasure, amounting to some thirty or forty pice (farthings).

As care-free, as unencumbered, the vagrants subsisted on the country, and the legendary reputation of "Feringhi medical skill," doctoring sore eyes, treating wounds, and diseases with equal unconcern, and occasional success, and especially alleviating the sufferings of lovelorn swains by

* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume I, page 82.

(for a consideration) giving love charms and philtres, wherewith to conquer the obdurate fair.

Usually they passed unmolested, their forlorn appearance being sufficient passport. But occasionally they were molested, as when an armed Pathan stopped and searched them thoroughly. Finding nothing, he demanded a drink from the water vessel which, though Masson protested was not fitting for a true believer after a Feringhi had drank therefrom, he obtained. Luckily he did not notice the pice at the bottom of the muddy water, and, much to Masson's relief he departed without attempting further harm. Masson remarks, " I know not how the fluid may have agreed with his stomach, or digestive powers, for the pice had been soaking for many days."

Eventually they arrived at Jalalabad, where Masson was entertained by the Governor, Sultan Mahomed Khan, and from hence drifted to the frontiers of Kafiristan, from entering which Masson was dissuaded by his Mussalman friends. However, he stayed some time on the border, and collected much curious information concerning those till then almost quite unknown, people. They then travelled on towards Ghuznee, in the wake of Dost Mahomed's army, in which cholera was raging. Masson describes some ghastly episodes, but all were surpassed by the state of Ghuznee, where every open place, tomb, and deserted house was crammed with rotting corpses.

At Ghuznee he fell in with Haji Khan, Kakur, then, and for long after, a stormy petrel in Afghan politics, but, always a firm friend of Masson, for whom he offered to obtain the command of Dost Mahomed's artillery, then vacant by the death from cholera of its European commandant. This Masson declined, as he did also an offer from Furdil Khan, Governor of Ghuznee, to enter his military service. Those were the days when every adventurer, if possessed of military knowledge or skill, was assured of employment, though, truth to tell, in Northern India it was usually restricted in scope and prospects.

Masson stayed at Ghuznee for some months, under the protection of sundry sirdars, and then set out, alone this time, for Herat. Owing, however, to molestation by robber bands, he made for Kandahar, and from thence passed into the Punjab by way of Shikarpur. On this journey, which commenced in January 1829, he met with the most serious experience of all his wanderings, being stripped naked by a band of wandering robbers, who even drove him away from their fire. But for the charity of a passing Mogul soldier, he would have died, for this man, who found him almost dead next morning, gave him some food, and a ragged poshteen.

Arriving at Fazilpur as described by Holdich, he stayed for some months with Rahmat Khan, to recover his health, and then passed on to Lahore, possessed of Rs. 2. Travelling by way of Multan, he arrived in Lahore about July 1829. He thus describes his journey, and experiences with Allard* :—

"Though I had lived very well on the road, and travelled 360 miles, I had still remaining half a rupee of the two I have received from Rahmat Khan. I was now, however, for a period to live in a very different fashion, in the house of General Allard, whom I accidentally encountered on my approach to the city. Notwithstanding my tattered dress, he surmised that I was a European and I answered him in his own language, which absence and length of years had not disabled me from speaking fluently."

Declining the military service promised by Allard, and to avoid Ranjit Singh, who might have forcibly detained him, Masson left Lahore very quietly, and made his way through Sindh. For certain information concerning the European officers of Ranjit Singh, we are indebted to Masson's stay in Lahore, for as usual, he carefully set down all that impressed him. Amongst the latter was the curious prophecy then current that, after the death of Ranjit Singh the Punjab would come under British rule

* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume I, page 405.

for 140 years. This having been endured, the Khalsa would be released from bondage, would invade, and conquer Hindustan, and then crossing the seas to Ceylon, and Mecca, totally destroy the Mahomedan religion.

Passing through Sindh, Masson embarked in a country boat at Karachi, his intention being to proceed through Bushire, Baghdad, and Aleppo, to Europe. But the hospitable reception by the European officials at Basra, and Bassadore, their interest in his wanderings, and accounts of the antiquarian and archæological possibilities of Afghanistan, and above all, a donation of funds from Sir John Campbell, the Resident in Persia, induced Masson to return to Afghanistan, and commence work on organised principles.

He arrived at Karachi in April 1831, suffering much from exposure in an open country boat. After recovering his health he joined a *kafila** proceeding to Kalat, and with this, passed on observing and recording every object of interest that he saw, as well as the mineral, and other resources of the country. It was he who first recorded the existence of those extraordinary prehistoric remains which are only now being investigated. From Kalat he returned to Sindh, and from thence went on to Kandahar and Kabul, arriving at the latter place in May 1832.

Meanwhile the Government of India, enlightened as to his existence by a letter from Persia, had instructed their secret agent in Kabul and the Punjab to ferret out Masson's antecedents. The following was the result† :—

"*Kabul, 25th December 1832.*—Early in November, whilst seated in a shop in the bazaar, a man passed by me, who had the appearance of a European, grey eyes, red beard, with the hair of his head close cut. He had no stockings nor shoes, a green cap was on his head, and a faqir or dervish drinking cup slung over his shoulder. He did not, however, resemble a dervish much, and appeared to

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* Caravan.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 139, letter No. 6.

be staring at everything with the curiosity of a stranger. I observed to the owner of the shop, who had been in Russia, that the man was a Russian; he replied, 'Yes, and all who have seen him say so'; but he is an Afghan.

" 'The man was then lost in the crowd, but a few days later I saw him again and accosted him, but got no answer, and he walked away very fast. Early in December following, a man came to Kabul about his son, who was afflicted with the palsy. In the course of conversation, he mentioned that the dervish came to his house, and seeing his son, said he had not his medicine with him, or he would cure him. The man asked him to write down the medicine and he would get it; whereupon the dervish said it was not procurable in India. He then asked a spell of the dervish, who, after muttering to himself, produced a small pen and ink, wrote something on a paper from left to right (European style), which he threw into the fire, and said: 'Your son will recover.' He had a compass with him, and understood Persian, but not Pashtu.' There seems to have been somewhat of the Christian Scientist in Masson's methods.

" A second report, of the same date, states*:—" A European arrived here in the month of May, and resided some four months in the house of Suliman, the Armenian. He describes himself as an Englishman, by name Masson, and of the sect of priests. He had been absent from his country 12 years, during which time he had been a traveller. He had lately come from Karachi Bunder through Sindh and Kandahar, and had with him two or three books in a foreign character, a compass, a map and an astrolabe. He was shabbily dressed, and his outward appearance denoted distress. He had neither servant, horse, nor mule to carry his baggage. Whilst at Kabul, he paid his respects to the Nawab Jubbar Khan, who pressed him earnestly to enter his service.

" The Nawab thought him to be a Frenchman, but Suliman says he firmly believes him to be an Englishman. Whilst living with Suliman, he had funds to pay his expenses, and mentions some part of his property as being in Sindh. He also borrowed Rs. 300 from a Kakuri, and

* Punjab Records, Book No. 139, letter No. 8.

sent it by *hundi* to Sindh or Hindustan. At Kabul he had an interview with Haji Khan, Kakuri (Governor of Bameean) who, on going to Bameean, sent for him. Having accepted the Khan's invitation, and hired a pony for six rupees, he set out, on the 10th September, for that place.''

As was his wont, Masson explored the environs of Kabul, and made the following discovery, which, as showing how early Englishmen penetrated into Afghanistan, and there left their bones, is interesting. Masson writes* :—

" But the most curious, and, to Englishmen, the most interesting gravestone to be found about Kabul is one commemorative of a countryman, which bears a simple epitaph and record, in large legible Roman characters. The monument is small, and of marble, not of the very frequent description of upright headstone, but of another form, which is also common, and which imitates the form of the raised sod over the grave. It is to be seen close to the *ziarat*, or shrine of Shah Shahid, in the burial ground east of the gate of the same name, and within some two hundred yards of it.

" It is rather confusedly engraved around the sides of the stone, but runs as follows :—

'HERE LYES THE BODY OF JOSEPH HICKS, THE SON OF THOMAS HICKS, AND ELDITH, WHO DEPARTED THIS LYFE THE ELEVENTH OF OCTOBER, 1666.'

" The date carries us back to the commencement of the reign of Aurungzeb, when Kabul was held by one of his lieutenants. This monument was one of the first objects of curiosity brought to my notice at Kabul, and residing immediately within the gate of the Bala Hissar near to it, I had it in sight whenever I left my house on a stroll. In those days there was a *kabbar-kan* (or grave-digger) well versed in the histories and traditions of the monuments and graves of the ground in which his practice prevailed. He was communicative, and informed me that he understood from predecessors that the monument com-

* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume II, pages 276-78.

memorated an officer of artillery, who stood so high in the estimation of the governor that they were buried close to each other on a contiguous mound.

" This, and the monument raised over the governor, were pointed out to me by the venerable depositary of funeral lore, and he assured me that the monument placed over the Feringhi (European) or of Mr. Hicks, had been removed before his memory from its correct locality, and placed over the grave of a Mahomedan; such transfers however indecorous or indelicate, being sometimes made. On a *tappa* or mound some distance to the south is another monument, of the same form, but of larger dimensions, which is also believed to rest on the grave of a Feringhi. The inference is here drawn from the direction of the stone, which is from east to west, no epitaph being present to render the fact certain."

This tombstone is also mentioned by Havelock*, Atkinson†, De Vigne‡, and Mackinnon§, who visited Afghanistan between 1838 and 1841. Unfortunately, none of them agrees, either with Masson or with each other, as to Christian names. Havelock and Atkinson give the first as Thomas, Atkinson and Mackinnon, as John, whilst De Vigne avers that it is William. Another writer, Barr||, gives the names as respectively, John, John, and Edith, whilst De Vigne again mentions the mother's name as Elizabeth.

We are inclined to agree with De Vigne, for a careful search through the records of the East India Company reveals the existence of William Hicks, a person of " desperate fortunes," who served the rival Courteen Company at Gujrat in the year 1652. Soon after this man disappeared into Bengal, and was reported dead, which may have been merely a ruse to enable him to escape his creditors. Mahabat Khan, Governor of Kabul in 1666, had

* Havelock's War in Afghanistan............, Volume II, page 146.

† Atkinson's Expedition to Afghanistan, page 287.

‡ De Vigne, Ghuznee and Kelat, page 287.

§ Mackinnon's Military Service in Afghanistan, page 188.

|| Barr's Journal of a March, etc., page 375.

formerly been Governor of Gujrat, and possibly having there known Hicks, had given him shelter and employment. It should be remembered that many of the Company's servants were skilled seamen and expert gunners, as well as traders.

Immediately after his return to Kabul, Masson, aided by a grant of Rs. 1,500, and an annual donation of Rs. 1,000 from the Bombay Government, commenced his archæological and antiquarian researches in earnest. It was stipulated that the whole of the proceeds should be sent to Bombay, an agreement which Masson faithfully carried out. What they expected to get for this miserable sum is problematical, but that the money was well invested is shown by Major Pottinger's acknowledgment of October 1834* :—

" The intrinsic value of Mr. Masson's finds is great .........I also desire to place on record my own opinion of him as a person of most superior education, and fine feeling."

In the book, *Ariana Antiqua*, are many illustrations by Masson himself, of the numerous topes he opened out, and from these he obtained a certain amount of information. But this was nothing to what was afforded by his numismatical finds upon the great upland plain of Begram, a site he identified with that of the graveyard of the capital of the long-vanished Ariana (Bactria, or the present Balkh). For ages this place had yielded countless coins and relics, to the villagers and nomads, all of which had disappeared into the bazaars of Kabul.

From this plain alone during the years 1833 to 1837 Masson collected and sent to India about 70,000 coins, most of which were copper, though an appreciable number were of gold and silver. Besides these, he sent in a great number of other relics in the shape of rings, brooches, amulets, and jewellery of various kinds, much of which is

* Punjab Records, Book No. 105, letter No. 77.

illustrated in *Ariana Antiqua*, and the journals of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.*

In such occupations, interspersed with occasional excursions into the remoter parts, he passed the time until 1834 when, the need arising for a reliable news-writer in Kabul, Captain Wade, the British Agent at Ludhiana, to whom Masson was, by now, fairly well known, thus wrote† :—

" *9th April 1834.*—On the 5th February 1833, I addressed an article of intelligence to you from Kabul, relative to Mr. Masson, and observed that the European in question was well known to the French officers and had been residing some seven years in the Punjab. That I believed him to be a deserter from our artillery, either on the Bombay or Bengal establishment, that he was represented to be a person of good education, and a good draughtsman, and that I should endeavour to ascertain with what views he was in Afghanistan.

" I accordingly wrote to our Agent in Kabul, who informed me that Mr. Masson was engaged in exploring the antiquities of that country, and had recently proceeded in company with Dr. Honigberger to excavate some extraordinary edifices in the vicinity of Kabul and Jalalabad, which had strongly excited their curiosity from their general similarity to the Manikyala structure.

" About the same time I received a letter from Dr. Honigberger, giving me a long account of his excavations, after which I heard no more of Mr. Masson till Dr. Gerard's arrival at Ludhiana, who confirmed my previous information concerning the nature of his pursuits, but gave me an insight into their value and importance I had not before possessed.

" Desertion is a crime viewed by our government with a degree or rigour which scarcely admits of pardon, but if the severity of our laws is such as to preclude the extension of his Lordship's clemency to him, I still hope that I may be excused for the correspondence I have opened with him, and that adverting to his acknowledged talent and

* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume III, page 249.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 140, letter No. 26.

ability and the light which his interesting researches are likely to throw on the ancient history, antiquities and present state of Afghanistan, I may be indemnified for any small sums I may advance Mr. Masson for the prosecution of his scientific labours.

"It is not merely from the nature of his scientific researches that Mr. Masson's services will be likely to prove advantageous to the government, but from the observations he has made, and the information he has collected upon the government and resources of a country which is of daily increasing interest to the Government of India. His long residence in Afghanistan has not only enabled him to acquire a complete geographical and statistical knowledge of the country, but living like he has done, like a native of it, on terms of intimacy and familiarity with its inhabitants, he has enjoyed opportunities of making observations which no European has yet possessed.

"In the course of his journeys he has visited parts of Afghanistan they have never seen. They have kept the beaten track, and have been the favoured guests of its chiefs. He has entered the innermost recesses of the country and associated day by day with an indigent peasantry which must give a value to his enquiries and ensure an accuracy not to be expected from those whose observations and opinions have been confined to beaten tracks."

The murder is out! This "person of most superior education, and extremely fine feeling" (Pottinger), an estimation corroborated by Havelock, De Vigne, Atkinson, Burnes, and Wood, all of whom came into personal contact with Masson at Kabul, was just what was, and is, usually considered the antithesis of a "*gentlemanly, refined, and fine feeling person*, just a *common private soldier*!" Here let us quote another letter, dated 24th September 1835, which gives Masson's army record* :—

"Mr. Masson was formerly a private soldier in the 3rd troop 1st Brigade of the Bengal artillery, his real name being James Lewis. Whilst in the army he attracted the

* Punjab Records, Book No. 102, letter No. 65.

attention of General Hardwick, and was engaged by him in classifying, sketching, and arranging his geological specimens. He served with his troop at the siege of Bharatpur, and shortly after that, he and a man named Potter deserted and went to the Punjab. Brown entered the service of Gulab Singh of Jammu, and Mr. Masson shortly afterwards left the Punjab, and went on to Kabul."

The motive underlying Wade's first letter was his desire to have Masson, who by now he knew fairly well (by repute), and, to judge by later letters, had confidence in, appointed newswriter at Kabul, this latter being the term for a kind of recognised spy. The Indian Mussulman, who had held the post from its institution in 1832, had mixed himself up in internal politics —a course which also threatened to embroil his employers. It was therefore necessary to replace him at once, and a man like Masson, who, though he had spent seven years in several independent states, had still retained perfect independence of action and sympathy, and was besides an Englishman, was admirably suited for the post.

The Government agreed with Wade, who was authorised to offer Masson the appointment on a salary of Rs. 250 per month,* with the promise, should he prove satisfactory, of procuring a free pardon from the King. Concerning this latter, the friends whom Masson had made in Persia, and in Bombay, were actively employed at home, and when the Government of India's recommendation came home, the pardon was granted. It is curious to note that though the East India Company was an independent military service, deserters from it required pardon from the King of England. It may be that the reason for this lay in the fact that at this period military service was a life engagement, and a man deserting from the East India Company was in exactly the same position as an escaped convict from the Australian penal settlement.

* Punjab Records, Book No. 118, letter No. 1.

Meanwhile, Masson entered upon his new post with such enthusiasm that he fairly deluged Simla with all kinds of written reports on Afghan commerce, manners, history, politics, geography, etc., to such an extent that he rather bored the exalted persons to whom his reports were addressed. However, they thanked him very nicely and placed on record their appreciation of his knowledge and industry.*

The inevitable result of Masson's accepting an appointment under the Government of India was an estrangement from most of his old friends amongst the Moulvies and Sirdars. Hitherto his independent position had placed him above suspicion, but now, as the paid servant of a power they were beginning to both fear and distrust, matters were on a different footing. Another factor in changing his position as regards safety was that it began to be rumoured about that he had discovered vast treasures in the course of his excavations, and that these were deposited in his house in Kabul.

The general result was that for the first time in all his wanderings Masson was compelled to lock his doors, and later to keep up an armed guard, for most Afghans of the lower orders would, and will, cheerfully murder a man for quite a small sum. The payment of these guards, and the men employed in the excavations must have made a sad hole in Masson's meagre salary, but this troubled him little for he could live on almost nothing. However, had it not been for his friendship with some Afghan nobles, notably Akhbar Khan, later the man who murdered the Envoy, and had the British forces massacred on the retreat from Kabul, he would have had to discontinue his explorations for want of funds.

These persons provided him with a certain amount of free labour (generously enough permitting him to keep all he discovered) probably because it was of little use to them.

* Punjab Records, Book No. 118, letter No. 34.

In the intervals of exploration he accompanied the Afghan armies on several expeditions of which full particulars were furnished to the Government of India, and in his official capacity as news-writer was present at the taking of Peshawar by Ranjit Singh's troops, and at the battle of Jamrud.

Meanwhile the Government of India obsessed with the fear of a Russian advance on India through Afghanistan conceived the idea of getting into closer touch with Afghanistan, first by means of a commercial treaty, later to be turned into a military alliance. From the commencement Masson was dead against the commercial treaty of which he recognised the futility, and this really was the cause of his bad treatment by the Government later. His views are on official record, but they are best expressed by the following quotation from his book* :—

"The Governments of England and India, as well as the public at large, were never amused and deceived by a greater fallacy than that of opening the Indus as regards commercial projects. The results of the policy concealed under this pretext has been the introduction of troops into the countries on and beyond the river, and some half dozen steamers on the stream itself, employed for warlike objects, not for those of training.........But at this time there was little notion entertained of convulsing Central Asia, of dethroning and setting up kings, of carrying on wars, of lavishing treasure, and of the commission of a long train of crimes and follies.

"There is besides great absurdity in commercial treaties with the states of Central Asia, simply because there is no need for them. From ancient and prescribed usage, moderate and fixed duties are levied, trade is perfectly free, and the more extensive the commerce carried on, the greater the benefit to the State. Where then was the benefit to be derived?"

To open the negotiations, Captain Burnes, a traveller of considerable eminence, and an officer in political employ, who had already visited Central Asia was deputed to

* Masson's Travels in Afghanistan, etc., Volume III, page 432.

Kabul. The attempt failed, for his instructions were very vague, and his powers strictly limited. Naturally, the Afghans soon found that there was nothing to be expected, or rather given, and treated Burnes with neglect, and even contempt.

Masson had no hand in the negotiations, other than that of advising Burnes that the Afghans were very wily persons, who desired much more than a *quid pro quo*. He also told him that the Amir was only playing him off against the Russians. Presently, the Russian envoy, also a captain, arrived at Kabul, on the same kind of mission, and making extravagant promises (afterwards disowned) was taken into favour, and the Englishmen cold-shouldered.

Such being the case, Burnes decided to depart, and Masson accompanied him, for, though he asserts that his personal friendships, and general inoffensiveness would have enabled him to carry on as before, he apparently realised that never again would his relations with the Afghans be the same.

As regards the mission, he was very outspoken, both in official letters and his books, attributing it as much to lack of power on the part of the envoy, as to his undue humility and trustfulness. Burnes, though he had travelled much in Afghanistan, and Central Asia, had hitherto only seen the sunny side of those countries.

One of Masson's statements which especially angered Sir Henry Lawrence, who being a moral man himself could not understand that any of his official compeers could be otherwise, was that Burnes, and his staff, were too lax in their relations with the Kabuli women. These, always addicted to immoral intrigues, which they could indulge in with impunity under cover of the *burqa*, were very free with the Englishmen and their staff.

Here let us mention that Sir Henry Lawrence, who wielded a ready, and on occasion, virulent pen, was

especially vindictive against Masson, and lost no opportunity of deriding, ridiculing, or even abusing him in the pages of the Calcutta Review, to which Lawrence was a frequent contributor, on political subjects.

However, what Masson said was perfectly true, and was later corroborated by Ferrier, who speaking of this mission, and the 1839-1841 occupation, thus remarked :—

" The women soon gave themselves up to the English for money even with the knowledge of their husbands; fathers and brothers sold their daughters and sisters, and it was a novel spectacle to see Christians become legitimate husbands of Mahomedan wives, for many women were legally married to English officers*."

It seems certain that, in throwing in his lot with Burnes, Masson cherished hopes of a political appointment under the Government of India, to which his unique knowledge of the peoples of Sindh, Baluchistan, and Afghanistan really entitled him, and in these hopes he must have been encouraged by the many commendations of his work, which had been expressed by that Government. But, had he considered well, he might have realised that his hopes were foredoomed to disappointment, for, all things considered, he had been but a private soldier, a person who in those days was regarded as the scum of the earth.

Apparently, conversations with Burnes on the way down to Peshawar convinced him that his hopes for any but the most subordinate posts were futile, so on reaching Peshawar, in May 1838, he tendered his resignation. Burnes, who, on paper at any rate, had a high opinion of Masson, had already placed this on record in the following letter, which elicited the response immediately following it† :—

" *Kabul, 9th October 1837.*—I feel it a duty incumbent on me to report for the information of the Rt. Hon.

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* Ferrier's History of the Afghans, page 335.

† Masson's Travels in Baluchistan, Volume III, page 484.

the Governor-General in Council the great aid and cordial assistance I have received from Mr. Masson, not only since I arrived here, but from his constant correspondence since I left Bombay. I feel I shall owe much to Mr. Masson, whose high literary attainments, long residence in the country, and accurate knowledge of people and events afford me at every step the means of coming to a judgment more correct than in an abrupt transit to Kabul I could possibly have formed. I discharge, therefore, a pleasing task in acknowledging the assistance I received from Mr. Masson, and whilst I do so, I consider it also my duty to state, that I by no means wish the Rt. Hon. the Governor-General in Council to consider Mr. Masson as responsible for the opinions and views I may take and report to the Government."

To this letter the Government replied :—

"The Governor-General has derived much satisfaction from the high testimony borne by yourself (Sir W. Macnaghten) and Captain Burnes to the praiseworthy manner in which Mr. Masson has conducted the duties entrusted to him, and Captain Burnes will be requested to furnish him copies of your letters, and the Governor-General's recognition of his faithful and valuable services."

All this, however, was valueless, and possibly Masson realised this when he accused Burnes of bad faith. In any case, it was not Burnes who at first opposed Masson's advancement, but Sir William Macnaghten, who, after Burnes had persuaded Masson to withdraw his resignation, and Lord Auckland had actually appointed him to a political post in connection with the projected expedition to Afghanistan, took upon himself to cancel it, and directed Masson to remain at Peshawar.

Disgusted at such treatment, Masson now re-submitted his resignation in such unequivocal terms that there was no alternative but to accept it. Concerning Masson's strictures on the official governing class, Holdich, who knew nothing of these letters, nor who Masson actually was, thus writes shrewdly and sympathetically* :—

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* **Holdich's Gates of India, page 408.**

"It is as a critic on the political methods of the Government of India that Masson's records are chiefly instructive. Hostile critics of Indian administrative methods usually belong to one or two classes. They are either uninformed, notoriety seeking demagogues playing to a certain party gallery at home, or they are disappointed servants of the Government, by which they consider that their merits have been overlooked. To this latter class it must be conceded that Masson belonged, in spite of his expressed contempt for Government service.

"The virulence of Masson's attacks on the ignorance and fatuity of the political officials with whom he came in contact must be freely discounted, because of the obvious animus which pervades them. Still, it is to be feared there is too much reason to believe that private interest was the recommendation which carried most weight in the appointment of unfledged officers, both civil and military, to political duty on the Indian frontier. These gentlemen took the field without experience, and without that which might to a certain extent take the place of experience, *viz.*, an education in the main principles, both social and economical, which govern the conditions of existence of the people with whom they had to deal."

Having, as he expressed it, freed himself from his thraldom. Masson returned to Bameean, through the Yusufzai country, in order to complete his observations and sketches and secure new material for his projected book. Having done this he returned through the Punjab, and passed down from Ferozepur to Tatta (in Sindh) in the train of the Governor-General. At Tatta, he put up with Colonel Pottinger, Commissioner of Sindh, and an old friend of his, and remained there for some months, completing his volumes of travel for the press, and the material for *Ariana Antiqua*.

Colonel Pottinger took both home with him, secured a publisher for Masson's own books, and handed the other over to the East India Company, who, after having it edited by Professor H. H. Wilson, published the results in a volume priced at five guineas. Of this, a few copies

were retained by the Company for itself, and the remainder were sold for the benefit of Masson's mother, then residing in London.*

Being now at a loose end, Masson decided to return to Kabul through Baluchistan, apparently relying upon his personality and the many friends he had made to be permitted to carry on his travels and exploration unmolested. But though he did not realise it, northern India was now a very different place to what it had been some thirteen years before.

The interference of the British in Afghan affairs had created a feeling of intense hatred in Afghanistan itself. This had penetrated to the adjoining countries, and as regards Baluchistan, had been accentuated by the conduct of the British army and their followers on its way through Kandahar. The troops had been kept fairly well in hand, but the horde of camp followers, who accompanied the armies of those days, numbering three times the fighting men, had devastated the country. Not only this, but the inevitable sniping and sporadic attacks on the invading soldiery had been punished with merciless severity by the soldiers in hot blood, and the political officers by so-called judicial methods.

In addition, the Khan of Kelat had been suspected of intrigues to hamper the progress of the advancing army, and to keep them short of provisions. Masson, and others allege that the Khan was maligned,† but, however this may have been, Kelat was stormed, the Khan with many others killed, and a puppet of the British set up as Khan of Kelat. Naturally, the whole country was very bitter against the English, and consequently anyone belonging to that nation, no matter how insignificant, was in extreme danger.

Fortunately for Masson, he found at Sonmiana, a port on the Sindh coast, where the Arab dhows harbour, and

* Calcutta Review, Volume 15, 1851, page 442.
† Calcutta Review, Volume XIV, page 313.

whence *kafilas* set forth, a caravan ready to set out under the charge of the same person he had accompanied on his former journey. But for this man and the friends he made in the *kafila*, and those who remembered him in his former progress, he would have had short shrift. Indeed, he had many narrow escapes, from which he was rescued only by the influence of Khalig Dad, and another person who knew him well.

Noting every object of interest, and taking copious notes of the geography and natural resources of the country, and the many prehistoric remains which he found, Masson drifted here and there, eventually arriving at Kelat to find the place fermenting under the rule of the usurping Khan, and the political officer left behind by the British to afford monetary and moral support to the new ruler. Unfortunately, no British troops had been left behind, so that this officer's only military support was from local levies, whose sympathies lay with the opposite side, and who were only held together by liberal payments.

According to Masson, this young man ruled the Kelatis with scorpions, and exulted in the number of rebels he had blown from guns, or otherwise executed. A certain amount may have been brag, or exaggeration by Masson, but there can be no doubt that he was very severe and injudicious. Masson relates amongst other instances, the facts that, just before his arrival at Kelat, Lieut. Loveday's bulldogs had pulled down and killed a Kelati, unhindered by their master. This incident appears to be true, for though Lawrence, in one of his tirades against Masson mentions these bulldogs, he does not contradict the statement.

On arrival, the traveller called on the officer, who treated him very rudely, not even asking him to take a chair, but recommending him to sit upon the ground, "a position I was well accustomed to." However, he offered him some breakfast, a favour Masson says which was dis-

counted by the continual bragging about what he had done and was about to do to the Kelatis, some of whom were Masson's friends. Quite possibly this was done with a view to intimidate Masson, whom he suspected of complicity with, or at least, sympathy for, the enemies of the new Khan. An invitation to dinner followed, but when Masson arrived, he found that the officer had gone to bed.*

Of course, after this, all intercourse ceased, Masson confining himself to his Indian friends—a course which accentuated Loveday's suspicions of his intentions, and caused him to send incriminating reports to Captain Bean, the superior political officer at Quetta.

Meanwhile, rebellion was brewing, and though Masson was intimate with the conspirators, he says that all knowledge of it was kept from him, his friends being as suspicious of him on their side as Loveday was on his. This unfortunate young officer was practically in the hands of a few of his Indian assistants, who kept him in ignorance of all that was impending, and lived in a fool's paradise of his own omnipotence and omniscience. Consequently, when the storm broke, he was both confounded and frightened.

In such an extremity, he sent for Masson,† who, forgetting all that had passed, threw in his lot with his countryman, and as the latter was disliked by even his Kelati supporters, took charge, at Loveday's request, of the defences of Kelat. What these were like may be seen from the following quotation‡ :—

"I was extremely sorry to find the guns useless. The largest was a curiosity, having been cast at Modena, in Italy, over three centuries before. There were three others of smaller calibre, which appeared but little more useful. These weapons were fixed on to the uncouth carriages by means of rolls of cord, rendering it impossible to point them with precision. The vents were apertures as large as the palm of the hand. I managed to fire a few rounds at

* Journey to Kelat, pages 68—71.

† Journey to Kelat, page 133.

‡ Journey to Kelat, pages 137—148.

random, pointing the gun as near as possible towards the insurgents. We afterwards found that though these shots had only killed a horse, they had so scared the chief of the insurgents that he sought safer quarters."

One would think that a greater curiosity than even this ancient Modenese gun must have been its travels and adventures during its, perhaps, centuries of progress from its birthplace to this remote Asiatic city. What a story might be written around its many owners, fortunes and misfortunes, and battles and skirmishes, could they only be forthcoming!

However, to return to Masson and Kelat. The defence might have been proof against the rabble surrounding it, and held out until relief arrived, but for treachery within. The expected aid not being forthcoming, the enemy set to work to suborn Loveday's counsellors, and succeeding in this, these men advised him to accept the terms offered. These were, an honourable surrender, good treatment, and a safe conduct to Quetta.

As might have been expected, the terms were never meant to be kept, and the first action of the Kelatis was to imprison both men and induce Loveday to sign a draft upon Quetta for Rs. 5,000. This having been cashed, other extortionate demands followed, and on Loveday's refusing to sign any more documents, both he and Masson were treated with extreme rigour, being chained together, starved, abused by one and all, and carried on a camel in the wake of the rabble now marching to Quetta.

Near this place, Masson, at Loveday's request, was released, and sent in with the terms of ransom. The political officer received him with suspicion and rudeness,* and eventually caused the messenger to be imprisoned under an armed guard. Here again his treatment was rigorous, for he was permitted to remain in the filthy and verminous rags he had worn for many days, and given no

* **Journey to Kelat, pages 248-49.**

food nor bedding for the first few days. But for the compassion of the Hindu guard, who provided covering by stripping a ragged blanket from a passing Hindu, and reporting his plight to the military officer in command, Colonel Stacey, Masson might easily have died of cold and hunger.

The food supplied him was but a couple of *chuppatis* a day, later supplemented on a remonstrance from Colonel Stacey, by " three farthings worth of sheep's intestines,* procured from the bazaar and served in an earthen dish such as dogs were fed from." " The foul mess " was conveyed to Colonel Stacey, who, after calling his officers to witness it, sent it on to Captain Bean, with such vigorous remarks that that gentleman sent his assistant, Lieut. Hammersley, to berate Masson for what he called " showing them up."

In the end Masson was advanced Rs. 100 (out of Rs. 3,000 due to him by the Government) and permitted to reclothe and feed himself. During his imprisonment he several times demanded to know on what pretext, and by whose authority, he was imprisoned, but with no result. until the ever useful Colonel Stacey, a brother numismatist, who was well acquainted with Masson's career and pursuits, sent up a letter direct to the Government of India, which elicited the following reply :—

" C. Masson, Esq.†

" I have received your letter, dated the 29th ultimo, and in reply have the honour to acquaint you that I did authorise Captain Bean to detain you at Quetta, until the pleasure of the Governor-General is known regarding your being permitted to prosecute your travels in countries sugject to the Crown of Kabul.

(Sd.) Wm. Macnaghten."

Eventually, Bean was superseded in political charge by Colonel Stacey, whose first action was to obtain an

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* Journey to Kelat, page 259.
† Journey to Kelat, page 262.

enquiry into Masson's case, the result of which was that he was not only exonerated, but recommended for compensation for unmerited imprisonment. Mr. Ross Bell remarking* "that no grounds had ever existed for imprisonment, and that the evidence showed that, in all his dealings with Loveday, Masson had been actuated by a genuine desire to serve that officer."

Bean's action in detaining Masson sealed Loveday's fate, for taking alarm, the Kelatis departed carrying Loveday with them from place to place, under conditions of extreme hardship and starvation, and in the end, when nearly overtaken by a British force, cut his throat. It is pleasant to note that Fortescue, in his History of the British Army, in describing these incidents, scathingly remarks on the politicals, especially Loveday, and mentions Masson as a simple and harmless soul; also that Colonel Stacey acting on Masson's advice, reversed the previous policy and thus expressed his thanks to Masson in writing thus :—

"Let me thank you for your kind advice when you were in your prison. You must be gratified to know that, acting upon it, I have accomplished what the world said was impossible."†

Major Outram, to whom Bean had attributed the information that Masson was a spy for the Russians, repudiated the allegation, and wrote through Colonel Stacey‡ :—

"Major Outram desires me to express his regret of Captain Bean's interpretation of his remarks concerning you, and that he was perfectly unconscious of having cast the slightest aspersion upon your character."

Though Mr. Ross Bell had recommended Masson for substantial compensation, nothing was ever given. His appeals were pitchforked backwards and forwards

* Journey to Kelat, page 268.

† Journey to Kelat, page 275.

‡ Journey to Kelat, page 278.

between England and India, until, thoroughly sick of the snuffling and evasions, Masson decided to go home and present his appeal in person. The result of this and the end of his connection with the Government of India is told in the following letter furnished by the Keeper of the Records of the Government of India* :—

"Mr. Masson wrote interesting papers for the Government of India on the trade of Kabul and resources of Afghanistan. He was arrested on suspicion during the insurrection in Kelat in 1840, but was released after an enquiry into his conduct. He was found innocent of the charge of intrigue, and was recommended by the Commissioner of Sindh, Mr. Ross Bell, for compensation for unmerited imprisonment.

"His claim for compensation was referred to the Government of India, who declined to award any, stating that his case had been fully considered, but sanctioned his arrears of salary and allowance, amounting to Rs. 3,560. He also received from the Court of Directors a further reward of £500, for his collection of antiquities, which on representation was doubled."

A curious feature concerning Masson's detention and connection with Loveday and the Kelat insurrection is that, nowhere is it mentioned, neither in the official records, nor books concerning Baluchistan at this period, with the exception of that by Dr. Mitford—a traveller who passed through Quetta at this time. Mitford remarks† :—

"At Quetta I met Mr. Masson, who had been detained by the Political Agent under suspicious circumstances, a detention fully justified in a country still in a state of war. He was a small man, not very sociable and might have been taken for a German. I did hear that he had been in the artillery. His detention did not last long however."

Masson's last literary effort, of which we know, was a volume of poems, written in 1849. To a review of this

* Government of India letter, dated 15th September 1926.

† Land March to Ceylon, page 120.

Henry Lawrence devoted twelve pages of sardonic comment, in the Calcutta Review, for with him Masson was an obsession, whom he lost no opportunity of ridiculing, or condemning. He might have spared himself the trouble for the poems might have been reviewed in one word. They were atrocious.

In conclusion and vindication of Masson's remarks concerning political officers, we may quote General Nott's opinion on the class with whom Masson came in contact. The Lieut. Hammersley mentioned had been Adjutant to Nott's sepoy regiment, and owed his appointment to the General's recommendation. Yet this did not prevent him from soundly berating the General, in front of his staff, for refusing to permit him (Hammersley) to enter Kelat whilst the fighting was in progress. He only desisted from his tirade when the long suffering General threatened to place him under arrest for insolence to a superior military officer.

There was another one with General Nott's column who also fell foul of the General for remonstrating against the brutal murder of a number of unarmed prisoners by Shah Shujah's adherents with the column. The General wrote a vigorous article in the Quarterly Review, concerning political officers, which so aroused Sir William Macnaghten's ire that he demanded Nott's supersession from the Commander-in-Chief in India, a request the Commander-in-Chief very wisely declined even to consider. Nott wrote* :—

" When we arrived here, the natives had a beautiful idea that an Englisman's word was sacred, and never to be broken. That beautiful character has gone, and with it every pledge and guarantee stamped under foot. When I was in Ghilzai, they found out who protected them, and who did not. My tent was always crowded with these people, begging to do something for me, and yet no one would go near the political agent. I like these people,

* Kaye's War in Afghanistan, Volume II, pages 350-51.

and would trust myself alone with them in the wildest mountains.

" The troops I sent out to-day will put the Government to enormous expense. The poor officers and men will be exposed to 120° in the sun, all because a foolish political officer destroyed a small village containing some 23 inhabitants. And why? Because he thought, only thought, mind, that they looked insultingly at him as he passed with his escort of 200 troopers. Had I been on the spot he would have had but eight, and then he might have been civil, instead of cruel, to the inhabitants. Fancy a young political officer with 200 troopers at his heels. Why, I ride ten miles into the country and enter villages and gardens with no escort but my syce, and meet with civility everywhere. This officer was Captain Peter Nicolson."

To conclude with a quotation from the ever useful Holdich* :—

" Here we must leave Masson. As an explorer in Afghanistan, he stands alone; his work has never been equalled; but owing to the very unsatisfactory methods adopted by all explorers in those days for the recording of geographical observations, it cannot be said that his contribution to exact geographical knowledge was commensurate with his extraordinary capacity as an observant traveller, or his remarkable industry."

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* Holdich's Gates of India, page 407.

# CHAPTER XI

## RICHARD POTTER. WILLIAM CAMPBELL

## MARTIN HONIGBERGER

### *Richard Potter*

Richard Potter, or as he was usually called in the Sikh service, John Brown, deserted from the Bengal Artillery in 1826, shortly after the siege of Bhurtpur, in company with Charles Masson, both of whom were present at the siege.

There seems to have been something very wrong with the Bengal Artillery at this stage, for desertions from it, both during and after the siege of Bhurtpur, were fairly numerous. Amongst the former was a Corporal named Herbert, who had served with the Royal Artillery at Waterloo, and two gunners, both Irishmen of bad character (according to the Court Martial proceedings). Whatever induced Herbert to desert is not forthcoming, but whatever his reasons, they made him so bitter that he at once took charge of the Bhurtpur guns, and improved their firing so much that it caused many casualties amongst his former comrades. In fact, one of his first shots nearly got the General, Lord Combermere, and badly scared the staff.

All three were taken prisoner after the storming of Bhurtpur, and tried by a drum-head Court Martial, Herbert being the senior, and the most culpable, was sentenced to be hanged on the breach, in front of the assembled troops,—a sentence which was duly carried out. The others were acquitted of intentional desertion in the first place, but, for having joined the enemy, were sentenced to penal servitude for life, a leniency the Commander-in-Chief considered misplaced, and upon which he strongly commented. Other men joined different Indian armies, and one of them was killed at Punnear,

in 1843, when the battery was stormed by the British. Unfortunately, in falling, he touched off a cannon, and killed half a dozen of the stormers, who were English soldiers.

Deserters in Indian services were very numerous in the later decades of the 18th century, and, in 1792, it was estimated that there were no less than 1,500 Europeans, with Indian State armies, of whom a large number were deserters from the French or English armies.

Yusuf Khan, a famous partisan chief, who had once served with the British, and actually gained a commission in the Company's service (the first pure Indian to do so) and later rebelled against them, had, when he was captured, no less than two hundred Europeans in his service, most of whom were deserters from the British service. Unfortunately the terms of surrender guaranteed their lives, an omission over which the Commander-in-Chief was exceedingly angry, for he had intended to execute the lot. However, he deported them instead.

Now, as quite a number of those who instructed the Khalsa forces were deserters from the British service, both Royal and Company, we believe that a short sketch of the ordinary life of the private soldier in India, at this period, will be interesting, as showing what reasons they had to cut themselves adrift from their country, and even occasionally fight against it.

At this time enlistment in both Company's and Royal army was, for what was defined as an unlimited period, in reality it was not so in the case of the Company's soldiers at least, for, after 15 years' good service, the individual cases were reviewed, and, if satisfactory, men were allowed to go at the completion of 21 years' service. A further advantage was that time in India counted one and a half times towards pension, so that a man of twenty one years' service would really have thirty two to his credit, and be rated accordingly for pension.

Men could elect to remain in India, but in such cases they were required to reside in specified places, any change requiring the sanction of a Commander-in-Chief whether in England or in India. Those who drew pensions were paid from what was called Lord Clive's fund, this being the revenues of jaghirs made over to him by Mir Jafar, which Clive surrendered for this purpose. When this was not sufficient, men were paid from Company revenues.

In addition to an out-pension list in India, there were, what was called, invalid or veteran Companies; the former were composed of men fit for light duties, but not yet qualified for pension or totally incapacitated. In these they served until they had done their time, after which, if desirous, they were sent to the veteran Companies, who corresponded to the Chelsea in-pensioners, with the exception that they drew full pay, etc., and were liable for military duty till the day of their death. There were such units in every Presidency, the veteran battalions, or companies being quartered in old forts, that of Bengal being at Chunar.

After the Mutiny, they were allowed to die out, but until 1895 regularly appeared in the Army lists. When we first noticed them, in 1892, the Chunar company consisted of one sergeant, a drummer and three privates, commanded by a major who came out to India in 1825, and lived at Mussoorie. Incidentally, the longevity of some of these veterans was remarkable. The officer just mentioned died in 1894, and the Chunar gravestones record quite a number of octogenarians, and two cases of men who had passed the century. This Company was drawn upon during the Mutiny, for gunners for the Allahabad Fort, and aboard the boats, which brought troops up the river from Calcutta.

We have before us the attestation papers of two recruits for the Bengal Artillery. In the first, dated 1821, Daniel O'Brien, stone-cutter of County Kerry, engages

to serve in the artillery of the Honourable Company of Merchants of London, trading to the East Indies, for a period of unlimited service, and a bounty of three guineas. In the second, John Parkinson, cotton spinner of Manchester, engages to serve for the same period. There is a double curtailment, for Parkinson only received half a crown, and the sonorous title of the first paper has been curtailed to the simple "East India Company."

Besides direct enlistment in the Company's service, men were permitted to volunteer from the Royal Army on completion of their regiments' term of service in India, each man receiving a bounty of from Rs. 200 to Rs. 400, an enormous sum for the soldier of those days. Invariably, this money was spent in an orgy of drunkenness and other vices, the men being encouraged to get rid of it as soon as possible, by immunity from punishment or duty as long as it lasted.

The pay of the Company's soldier was higher than that of the Royal Army, and amounted to about 14 annas a day, to which was added rations and a free issue of two drams of rum per day, there being about six drams to a reputed quart, or what is now an ordinary whisky bottle. In this issue lies the origin of the word "peg" as denoting a measure of spirituous liquor. Above the tub from which the men were supplied was hung a board, having their numbers painted upon it. This number was surmounted by two holes, in each of which as the dram was issued, a wooden peg was inserted. This saved the trouble of book-keeping, the amount issued, and to whom, being simply copied in bulk. When both holes were filled, the man was said to be "pegged up," and referred to the board as proof.

The Company's soldiers were permitted a considerable amount of freedom off duty, and to make what female connexions they chose, without the ceremony of marriage, unless the partners were Europeans or Eurasians. There were no such things as married quarters, the married men

living in the barrack room, though perhaps a portion was screened off for their accommodation. Off duty discipline was lax, but on duty strict in the extreme, and the punishments fiendish.

Flogging was an episode, and given for the slightest offences, sentences of five hundred to a thousand being often inflicted, 800 being a favourite number. How the men survived it we know not; many died under the lash. This punishment was rendered all the more degrading by being inflicted in the presence of the sepoys, who in the later years, after 1820, were themselves exempted from it. In fact, the Company, possibly in order to show that being a European gave the soldier no special favour, went out of their way to humiliate the European soldier before the sepoy. How this policy paid them the Mutiny showed.

Here follow a few instances of other punishments :—

" General Orders, Fort St. George, 1795.

" This day, agreeable to the General Order of the 14th inst., Lawrence Currie and George Warburton, Matrosses of the Coast Artillery, cast lots on Marmelon Plain, when the former, on throwing the lower cast, was shot to death according to the General's sentence."

Up to about 1820, the private gunner was called a Matross, a term derived from the Dutch, who were the first to organise a regular military artillery. In this particular case, there were seven men involved, their crime being a refusal of duty as a concerted protest against severe punishments. On the morning fixed for the execution, the men were brought on parade at 6 A.M., and kept there whilst the gallows was being erected. None of them knew what their sentences were, but all expected the worst.

At 8 o'clock, General Horn, addressed the prisoners in a twenty minutes' homily, pointing out the terrible nature of the crime they had committed, and then, extolling his own merciful inclinations, he read out the sentences.

The two men sentenced to death were then paraded around the square, to the strains of a dead march, and then after another long oration from the General, were informed that only one was to die, and that they were to cast lots for it. He also informed them that he had decided to remit the disgraceful punishment of hanging, and that he was to be shot to death.

This sentence was then carried out before the troops. What the feelings of the unfortunate men must have been may be imagined, when we state that the whole affair lasted for four hours. Another instance, a few years later, records :—

" *Calcutta Gazette, 1798.*—A general court-martial, which sat in Madras on 12th April, 1798, sentenced the prisoners, Clarke, Stumbles, Banks, Forster, Lawrence, and Connor to be sentenced to death for the crime of mutiny, the first three to be hung in chains, Forster to be blown away from a gun, and Lawrence and Connor to be shot to death with musketry."

This offence was also a refusal of duty, and the sentence of being blown from a gun is the only one on record, in which a European suffered. Another incident is recorded by Major Mackinnon, who writes :—

" In the year 1842 I witnessed the execution of a private of the Horse Artillery at Meerut. The numerous spectators present can bear witness to the prolonged sufferings of the culprit. The rope being adjusted, one native pushed him off a low cart under the gibbet, whilst two others tugged at the rope to hoist him up. The convulsive writhings of the sufferer long haunted me. They lasted for nearly twenty minutes."

To conclude this series, let us narrate our experiences of what was probably the last military execution held in public in India. This took place at Lucknow in the year 1887, and the events leading up to the crime and the execution itself, had been, we believe, made use of by Kipling in his story, Black Jack, and a barrack-room ballad Danny Deever. But there was no woman in the case, the

sergeant who was shot having been murdered for what the men considered overstrict disciplinary methods.

Having decided to " put him out of mess " the men concerned who belonged to the convalescent depôt at Ranikhet, and several different regiments, decided to draw lots, as to who was to carry out the sentence. A pack of cards was laid face downwards, and each drew in turn, after they had been carefully shuffled by each man. The card selected was the Ace of Spades, or Black Jack, as it was called. He who drew it, a lance-corporal of a regiment quartered in Lucknow, took his rifle, and at 9 o'clock that night shot the sergeant who was sitting alone in his tent.

The murder having been traced to him, he was tried by a General Court Martial, and sentenced to death. As at that time military murders were very frequent, owing probably to the men having twenty rounds of ammunition in their personal possession, the Commander-in-Chief decided that the execution should be public. Accordingly, this man was hanged at Lucknow before the assembled brigades of European soldiers, with the usual ghastly attendance of the band playing the Dead March, the clergyman reciting the prayers from the Burial Service, and the coffin borne before the prisoner, as he was paraded round the square. During this awful scene, an almost absolute silence prevailed, save for the voice of the clergyman, or when he had ceased, the band playing the Dead March, or when both were silent, the faint rattling of the harness of the horses of the Artillery and Cavalry on parade.

Having arrived at the gallows, the coffin was laid before it, and the prisoner pinioned and capped, his head being enclosed in a pillow case. The silence was absolutely deathly, except for the occasional rattle of accoutrements as some young soldier overcome by the strain, fell to the ground in a faint, and was removed. Most awesome of all was the long shuddering sigh that went up as the figure suddenly disappeared from view, and the rope,

after one violent jerk, became rigid. To add to the horror, the men were kept waiting on parade, for some twenty minutes, after which the screen around the raised platform was removed, and the brigade marched past the dangling body.

Life for the ordinary soldier in barracks was very dismal; there were no canteens or reading or recreation rooms; the quarters themselves were squalid and at night lit only by a feeble wick floating in a vessel of cocoanut oil. Punkahs did not come into use for soldiers until after the Mutiny; naturally, under such circumstances the soldiers sought the bazaars for the lowest of female companionship, always venial, and drowned their wits and sorrows in alcoholic brews of the strongest and deadliest variety. We have heard survivors of the period discourse eloquently of the respective merits of Daroo, toddy, samshu (in China), and Cape Smoke at the Cape, the best of which could be said that like Hogarth's famous Gin Alley, one could get drunk on them for four annas, and delirium tremens for a rupee.

The only games were cricket, which, however, could only be played on winter days, a game called handball in the great courts still to be seen in old cantonments, and a curious one called hurling much in favour with the Irish troops, a game which consisted in bowling an iron or stone ball along the roads, he who attained the goal in the least number of " hurls " being the winner.

The mortality from climatic conditions, disease, drink, and vice, was appalling, the worst of all being cholera, epidemics of which endured to the closing decade of the 19th century, the last we remember being in 1894, when exactly one hundred men of the East Lancashire regiment died at Lucknow. The old burial records and monuments scattered all over Hindustan and the Punjab tell terrible tales of cholera. Of these two came to our notice when searching the burial records of Lahore for traces of the

adventurers. In June 1851, 68 men of the 51st Foot died in a week, whilst in July 1856, nearly 450 men, women, and children of the troops quartered at Lahore and Mian Mir succumbed within ten days.

But, there were many advantages connected with the Company's service, for any man of good character, and even average education, could obtain a staff appointment, more or less lucrative, but all infinitely better than regimental life. In Bengal alone, there were about 200 units of natives. infantry and cavalry, regular, irregular, local and provincial, to each of which was appointed a European sergeant-major and quartermaster sergeant, the cavalry having a riding master in addition. Besides these, nearly every civil appointment under the Government, from parish clerks to canal engineers, was filled from the local European army.

As there were only 3,000 artillery and 1,500 infantry in Bengal, and the staff appointments over 1,200, it will be seen that opportunities were many. It was probably these opportunities that attracted theproportion of well-educated men, of whom Henry Lawrence spoke when advocating commissions from the ranks for the Company's soldiers. He remarked in the Calcutta Review that in 1840, probably no army in the world had so large a proportion of well-educated men as the Company's artillery, who were the pick of the service.

It was probably as much these opportunities as the golden tongue of the Sergeant Kite of the period, gilding the already glamorous East that attracted these men, for the advantages were well advertised.

Therefore, those who deserted to native services were men who had acquired a bad character, one very easy to obtain in those days, men of no education, or the adventurous and ambitious, who disliked the eternal prospect of a strictly regulated existence, with nothing or perhaps a meagre pension at the end of it. Of this latter class

was Masson and Potter, both of whom were educated men. We shall now quote a description of the life of a deserter-adventurer in the Sikh service, from a little book published by Henry Lawrence in 1842, called "an Adventurer in the Punjab." But the sepia tint of this description must be taken with a reserve, for Lawrence's idea was probably to discourage soldiers deserting to such services, by painting in a very murky landscape.

Though he gives the name John Brown, and probably had Potter in mind, this being the name by which he was usually known in the Punjab, the description is not true as concerning him. Lawrence's description runs* :—

"John Brown was the son of an honest labourer in England. He embarked for India with wet eyes and a lump in his throat, and thought of the day when he would return from 'Injy' with money enough to buy a farm and settle in his native place. On board ship, when the rations were served out, he was obliged, like the rest, to take his place at the tub and swallow his two drams. At first he took it like medicine, but in the monotonous confinement of a ship's life, he soon learned to look forward to the stimulant, and it became needful to him; so that when he landed in Calcutta, he had no thought but the grog shop.

"Personally illiterate, and surrounded with profligacy, and without a friend to warn or protect him, he soon fell into the common routine and did as little duty as possible; was drunk as often as possible, got an occasional reprimand, or extra drill, and paid off his ill-humour on the first black fellow he came across. In this condition he came up country. When at Karnal, he was flogged for being drunk on duty, and whilst he was still smarting from the effects, he fell in with the emissary of a clever scoundrel, who had deserted to Dhian Singh's service.

"Brown deserted from his regiment and crossed the Sutlej. At first he was delighted with finding himself a rich and independent gentleman, classed as a commander, and receiving five rupees a day. But he soon found himself a very slave, that he was closely watched, and must

* Adventurers in the Punjab, page 185.

make up his mind to live and die in Dhian Singh's service. In the event of a siege, and any suspicion falling upon him, he would be blown away from one of his guns.

"His tempter was now dead from the effects of dissipation and such wretched fellowship as Brown had with him was now ended. He was alone on earth, encouraged to spend his pay in profligacy, so that he might not save money, and drown the remembrance of the country and companions he had quitted for ever. He was a fair specimen of the deserters to be found in the Lahore service, who, leaving a certain competence for what they consider an El Dorado, find that they sacrifice more than gain in increase of pay and rank."

With all due respect to Lawrence, who was a thorough friend to the soldier, and his dependants, one could hardly consider fourteen annas a day a certain competence. We also note that he states that even in the Company's service, Brown was surrounded by an atmosphere of profligacy, drink, and vice. What then had he lost? If he were held in chains in the Sikh service, these were gilded with a certain amount of freedom, and very much more money than he could have obtained had he remained with the artillery.

Being of the deserter class, the existence of Brown was not so patent as that of the more legitimate officers in Ranjit Singh's service, hence there is no mention of him in contemporary books, and, it is not until nearly fifteen years after his entry into the Khalsa service that we obtain a glimpse of him. This occurs in the list of Europeans in the Khalsa service of 1841, in which Brown is described as "Colonel Brown, an American, who has charge of the artillery depôt at Lahore, and its record office on a salary of Rs. 350 a month." We then lose sight of him until 1844, when he re-appears as commandant of a battalion belonging to Gulab Singh in Kashmir.

The first mention outside Government Records occurs in Major McGregor's "History of the Sikhs*":—

* McGregor's History of the Sikhs, page 140.

" Previous to the Battle of Aliwal, a European came into Ludhiana from the Camp of Ranjit Singh. He said his name was Brown, but this was merely an assumed one, his real name being Potter. He had originally been in the Bengal Horse Artillery, but had deserted soon after the siege of Bhurtpore in 1826. Even since that period, he had been in the Sikh service as an artilleryman. He had nearly lost all appearance of an Englishman, and retained but little of his national feelings, as he candidly confessed. The object of his visit was somewhat doubtful, though he professed himself willing to surrender and return to his allegiance as a British subject. It was suggested to him that he had better return to the Sikh service, where he might be of service to the British.

" He was afterwards taken prisoner on the 28th, and asserted that he had purposely laid the Sikh guns so as not to injure the British. That their guns were thus elevated was probable, but whether this was owing to Potter's arrangements was very doubtful. He was brought prisoner to Akbarwala, and with four of his guns, which were exquisitely finished and ornamented."

Another account by Major Mackinnon runs* :—

" A deserter from the Bengal Horse Artillery, John Potter by name, fell into the hands of the English during the enemy retreat, and was recognised by some of his former comrades. He had been some time in the Sikh service, and was instrumental in directing the enemy's light guns upon his countrymen; for which employment he would speedily have been consigned to tender mercies of the vultures had the soldiers who captured him not been restrained by the Political Agent, who hoping to make some use of the renegade, saved his life. Mr. Potter had evidently imbibed a strong predilection for his native country, and maintained that it would be impossible for us to subdue the Sikhs with the forces now assembled."

Lawrence occasionally refers to Potter in his articles on the Sikh War, published in the Calcutta Review of 1844, but mainly to enable to gird at his *bete noire* Masson. His reason for rescuing Potter (or Brown) was that he had been instrumental in securing good treatment for some

* Mackinnon's Military Services, page 182.

prisoners taken by the Sikhs before the Battle of Aliwal. In consideration of this, he was not only pardoned but reinstated in the Khalsa service as an artilleryman. A little later he was transferred to one of van Cortlandt's battalions, and served with this before Multan.

At this period we find a mention from Reynell Taylor, who mentions Potter by name, remarking that "Though a Sikh officer, he was a very sensible person, who warns us of coming trouble. He is an Englishman." After the annexation, Potter was employed in the police battalion, raised from the Khalsa soldiers, and in 1856, having gone blind, received a compassionate pension of Rs. 60 per month from the British Government.

Besides Potter, there are other mentions of men who served with the Sikhs against us, of whom we shall speak later, and in connexion with these, one of them was probably an escaped prisoner taken by the Afghans in 1841; a number of others never escaped, and of these we find casual mentions. For instance, Ferrier, a French traveller in Central Asia, who published a book in 1846, relates that in 1843, two battalions of infantry belonging to Yar Mahomed Khan of Herat, were disciplined by an Englishman named Kerville (Carrol) who had been taken prisoner in 1842.*

He relates that there were still some 20 captives, Europeans and Indians, with Yar Mahomed Khan, and he had actually received a letter from one, described by the messenger as having red hair and green eyes. Unfortunately Ferrier could not read English, and the fact of the letter having passed to him being betrayed, it was taken away, the messenger himself killed, and Ferrier ill-treated. From a study of the records and contemporary history, we are of opinion that this man was not a prisoner from the Retreat, but an officer of the Indian Navy named Wyburd, who had been deputed on an exploring mission in Central Asia.

* Ferrier, Caravan Journeys, pages 211 and 300.

Some years before he had been taken prisoner by Yar Mahomed Khan, a fanatical hater of all Europeans. There are many letters concerning Wyburd in the Records, and it was not until 1848, that Yar Mahomed Khan added his murder to those of Stoddart and Connolly.

In 1847 it was reported to the Government of India that there were still a number of captives in Afghanistan.* A special emissary was deputed to effect their rescue, and did so, ransoming some 150, all of whom were Indians, except one, a European boy aged about 15, who knew nothing of his name, but was called Sher Mahomed. He was sent to the newly founded asylum at Sanawar. Yet another European, then about 22, escaped from Afghanistan in 1861, and being adopted by some missionaries at Ludhiana, was by them given the name of John Campbell, and sent to England to be educated. After two years or so he returned to India, but failing to secure any employment, he returned to Afghanistan, averring that he was sadly disappointed with his own countrymen, and preferred the society of the Afghans to theirs.

*William Campbell.*

Though the person has been claimed as a Scotchman by the perfervid historian of the Campbells, who claims every one of that name in the Far East from 1615 upwards, this one was only so in name.

As with so many of Ranjit Singh's other officers, Campbell first appears at Lahore, having made his way by some devious route to that place, in order to avoid the inquisition, or possibly refusal of passage, at Ludhiana. However, the watchdog at Lahore was this time on the alert, and thus announces Campbell's arrival :—

†"*1st October, 1828.*—A person named Campbell has been admitted into Ranjit Singh's services. He is an Indo-Briton, formerly in Baptiste's brigade in Scindia's service. He quitted this for the service of Durjun Lal, of

* Punjab Records, Book No. 175, letters Nos. 17 and 119.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 97, letter No. 136.

Bhurtpore, and served him during the siege of that place. After Durjun Lal's defeat, he sought service at Agra, but failing there, came on to Lahore. The Maharajah accepted his services, and gave him command of a small body of troops.''

Though Campbell had already fought against the British, that fact does not seem to have prejudiced him in any way, for though he was often associated with the British later, no steps were ever taken to punish him.

In common with so many others, Campbell's name does not appear in the Khalsa pay-rolls, so we may assume that he was paid by one of the feudatory rajahs. The only contemporary notice is that of Masson, who arrived in Lahore in mid-1829, and mentions that Campbell, who had then been recently dismissed, had commanded a regiment of 1,200 horse. Though he had apparently so impressed the Maharajah, as to obtain, at the outset, a fairly good command, his services were brief, and the following describes his exit from it:—

" *1st September, 1829.*—The Maharajah has discharged Mr. Campbell and sent him with an escort to the left bank of the Sutlej. He entered the Sikh service some 12 months ago, and raised and commanded a corps of cavalry, in the execution of which duty he seems to have gained the favour and consideration of His Majesty. But some cause of offence connected with women is said to have arisen between him and the Maharajah, and in consequence Mr. Campbell applied for his discharge. I am not aware of the route by which he entered the Punjab.''

It should not be assumed that because Campbell was dimissed on account of some " offence connected with women,'' that there was anything shady or disgraceful in the matter, for quite possibly the Maharajah had desired to foist upon him one of those discarded mistresses, whom it was his habit to plant in the households of his European officers, in order to act as spies upon them.

For the next few years we hear nothing of Campbell, until April, 1833, when he re-appears as commandant of a

battalion of Hindustanis whom he had raised and trained for Shah Shujah, then about to make his abortive attempt to regain the throne of Kabul, from which he had been driven twenty-three years before. After wandering for some years, Shah Shujah ultimately arrived at Lahore, where he took shelter with Ranjit Singh, who after fleecing him of the Koh-i-Nur diamond, treated him so severely that he fled from the Punjab, and took shelter at Ludhiana, with the British, who, sheltered him and gave him an allowance of Rs. 6,000 a month.

Meanwhile, he had never lost hope of regaining his throne, so, when in 1833, favourable news from Harlan (whom we shall mention later) led him to believe that the time was propitious, he endeavoured to do so. He received a certain amount of aid in money from the British, and, as Syed Mahomed Latif remarks :—

* "Having engaged the services of an East Indian named Campbell, and bought two guns from the Raja of Thanesar, Shah Shujah left Ludhiana to invade Kabul, and recover the throne from which he had been driven in 1810. On the festival of Eed, the Nawab of Maler Kotla presented him with Rs. 5,000 and two horses. He then moved on to Jagraon, where Fateh Singh sent him Rs. 2,000 and a number of swords. From thence he proceeded to Bahawalpur, receiving from the Nawab Rs. 5,000, and a number of camels. He then went on to Shikarpore, where Husain Shah presented him with Rs. 50,000, five or six horses, and some swords and tents. He remained at Shikarpore for ten months, sending a present of a Persian horse and some tents to Ranjit Singh, who presented him with Rs. 1,35,000 and a gun, and some matchlocks, on the understanding that he would relinquish for ever his claims to the territories of Attock, Kashmir, Peshawar, and the Derajat.

"Near Shikarpore, the Shah was attacked by the Sindhian Amirs, whom he signally defeated on the 9th January, 1834, capturing four guns and exacting a sum of Rs. 5,00,000. Greatly elated by his success; he marched

* History of the Punjab, pages 461-62.

towards Kandahar, collecting from the Khan of Kelat Rs. 1,00,000, four horses and twenty camels. Having reached Kandahar, he laid close siege to the town. Dost Mahomed, hearing of this at once marched to the relief with 20,000 horse, 5,000 foot, and about 18 guns, being joined at Kandahar by his son Mahomed Akbar Khan, with 12,000 cavalry and four guns.

"On the arrival of this re-inforcement, Dost Mahomed, unsheathing his sword, directed a forward movement, but returned after galloping some 500 yards. At about five in the morning the Shah directed Campbell to attack the enemy, and that officer, by a skilful move, succeeded in carrying all before him, dispersing in every direction in succession the battalions of Abdul Sami Khan, and the cavalry of the Kandahar chiefs. Early next morning the enemy drew up his forces in order of battle, and the two generals of the Shah's army moved forward to meet him, Mr. Campbell being sent forward with two battalions, but without guns to support him, or any cavalry. The whole of the remaining force was ordered to support him. Anything like order or discipline was quite unknown to the Shah's troops, the several divisions acting independently of each other.

"The result was that the Shah's troops were hemmed in between the dry banks of a steep watercourse, and fell into confusion. The Shah from his elephant, ordered Mr. Campbell to "Chapao" or rush forward to the attack, the latter remonstrated saying this was no time for breaking the ranks, but for a bold stand and steady fighting. The Shah, however, was headstrong, and repeated the order, but to the astonishment of all, in the same moment, turned his elephant and fled.

"Mr. Campbell engaged the enemy for two hours though badly wounded, but was finally overpowered and taken prisoner. Three hundred of his Hindustanis who had been in the Company's service, also made a bold stand but were finally overpowered by numbers. The enemy's triumph was followed by terrible scenes. The whole of the artillery and stores fell into Dost Mahomed's hands. Had all been like Mr. Campbell matters would have ended very differently. The Amir treated Mr. Campbell very well,

having him treated by a surgeon, and when well put upon an elephant and sent to Kabul. Finally he put Mr. Campbell in charge of his artillery on Rs. 400 per month."

According to the news writer's report Campbell was wounded by two balls in the thigh, and some severe sword cuts. Apparently he became practically Commander-in-Chief of the Afghan army, if the following report is correct* :—

" Mr. Campbell recently informed Dost Mahomed that seven regiments of infantry and four of cavalry were in fine order, and ready for the field. Dost Mahomed thereupon assembled all his troops numbering 30,000 Horse and 12,000 Foot and reviewed them. He expressed himself well satisfied, and promised to lead them against Peshawar in the cold season."

Shah Shuja returned to Ludhiana, and remained there until 1838, when he was brought forth by the British to be set up as a puppet king in the room of Dost Mahomed, for reasons which do not here concern us. At British expense he was provided with an army of about 5,000 men officered by the Company's officers, and N. C. O's., and, accompanied by a British force of 3 Brigades of Infantry and one of Cavalry, advanced on Kabul *viâ* Kandahar, whilst a mixed army of Sikhs and British advanced through the Khyber.

As might have been foreseen, and was actually prophesied, by many, this attempt to foist upon an unwilling nation, a King whom they had driven out many years before, and whose restoration was forced upon them by a foreign nation in its own interests, failed in the end, though for two years the British maintained themselves at Kabul, by bribery and promises, which however, were impossible to fulfil. So long as money was forthcoming the Afghans tolerated the presence of this small force of British in their capital town, but when the liberal subsidies given to the Sirdars and tribesmen, were discontinued by the

* Calcutta Journal, 1835, page 331.

Government of India, who too late realised the enormous expense of the enterprise they had undertaken, the revolt broke forth.

On the 2nd of November, 1841, an armed mob attacked the house in the city, wherein lived Sir Alexander Burnes, his brother, and William Broadfoot, and murdered them and their escort, after a gallant defence. The treasury next door containing two lakhs of rupees, was also looted, and having done this, the houses were set afire, and all within them, killed or wounded, burnt alive.

The military operations following the outbreak were futile and dilatory, for the General in command was feeble in body and senile in mind. His second in command, Colonel Shelton, of the 44th Foot, was a contentious, strong-willed, and generally impossible person, who not only despised his superior, but openly opposed him. Nor were Shelton himself, or his immediate inferiors, much good as soldiers, a defect which lost them the confidence of the soldiers they commanded, and led to several military disasters. Shelton made no attempt to penetrate into the city, and disperse the rioters, contenting himself with simply parading his troops. The account, written by Major Hough, in the Calcutta Review of 1850, states :—

*" Immediately the news of the attack came to Shah Shujah, he ordered Campbell's regiment out to the rescue, and at the same time a British force was ordered to move into the city in support. When the Shah ordered Campbell's corps to march into the city, he left the movement to the discretion of the commandant, who thoughtlessly plunged his men and guns into the main thoroughfare from the Bala Hissar. Had he moved without the embarrassment of guns along the hill base (of the Bala Hissar) he could have reached without danger or difficulty the end of the short street, in which Burnes and the Treasury were, and could easily have forced his way to them, but by endeavouring to make good his passage

* Calcutta Review, 1850.

through the heart of the city, and struggling in vain to drag his guns through its winding obstructed streets, courted defeat. Accordingly, he was resolutely attacked and repulsed with a heavy loss of men, without being able to reach the scene of plunder and butchery.

"Shelton, on reaching the Bala Hissar, kept his detachment under arms, but made no attempt against the insurgents. After losing an hour in inactivity he sent out an officer, who reported that Campbell's corps were beaten and retiring. He then ordered out a company of sepoys to cover the retreat. They managed to get back the guns, but left them lying in the ditch of the fort. Although Campbell failed, he deserves the credit of having displayed more resolution and energy than others who did nothing."

The military operations following this episode, are as little creditable as itself, and deserve oblivion. Let us content ourselves by stating that eventually the British were permitted to retreat from Kabul through the Khyber, and its preceding passes, under promise of safe conduct. How that promise was kept is well known, and a vivid account of the disastrous retreat will be found in our appendix. So far as regards Campbell, there are a few mentions by British officers engaged in this expedition. Havelock relates* :—

"We found in Kabul on our arrival, two adventurers of American and British origin: one was Mr. Campbell, and the other Mr. Harlan. Mr. Campbell had formerly been employed with the forces of Shah Shujah in 1834, and behaved with great bravery in the action under the walls of Kandahar, but was wounded and taken prisoner ......a circumstance which led to the panic flight of his Royal Master. He next followed the fortunes of the Barakzais, and was in favour some time with the Amir of Kabul, and resided in the Burj-i-Wazir, a fortified house in the suburbs of the city. Before the British reached Kabul, Campbell was sent over the Hindu Kush under the surveillance of the Amir."

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* Havelock's Campaigns in Afghanistan, Volume II, page 145.

Doctor Atkinson*, explains the reasons—

" Before quitting the capital, Dost Mahomed called for Campbell, and ordered him to advance with the Qazilbash troops, saying that he had eaten the Shah's salt, and could not be so ungrateful as to fight against him."

After Shah Shujah's re-instatement, Campbell re-entered his service, and was placed in command of his personal guard, a battalion consisting of 500 Hindustanis, and continued in this after the British had retreated from Kabul. Some time after the massacre, more trouble arose for the Shah, who never a wise or politic man, had treated his opponents most unmercifully. Even on the advance into Afghanistan, he had disgusted the British officers, other than the politicals, with his force, by his brutal treatment of the prisoners taken in the advance. Sir William Nott speaks with the utmost indignation of the leisurely slaughter of 200 men before the Shah's tent, by his ruffianly followers, and there are several other instances of his cruelty.

Utterly disgusted with their ruler, the Sirdars plotted to murder him, and one evening when out riding, the Shah was shot down, his body stripped, and thrown into a wayside ditch. Extraordinarily enough, the British restored Dost Mahomed to the throne, and almost as extraordinarily, he received Campbell back into his service, in which he died in the year 1866.

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*Doctor Martin Honigberger.*

Not the least interesting of our Europeans is this simple minded and worthy old Transylvanian.

The Punjab Records do not afford us much information regarding his career in Ranjit Singh's service, which was broken up into two parts, separated by several years, but he has left us the record of his life, adventures, and experiences, in a ponderous volume of some 500 pages,†

* Atkinson Expedition into Afghanistan, page 260.

† " Thirty-five years in the East."

profusely illustrated, which besides his personal history, contains much interesting medical, botanical, and archæological lore. Of the value of most of this we are no judges, but the ancient doctor discourses learnedly on the virtue of nearly every remedy or medicine beneath the sun, from tiger's whiskers to pounded locusts, and from jack fruit to mustard seed.

No disease or injury seems to have come amiss to him, and he treated them either with or without instruments or drugs, and strangely enough often succeeded in his most drastic experiments. He relates wonderful cures of plague, glanders, hydrophobia, small-pox, cobra bite, stone, etc., and marvellous surgical operations which, withal, are given with such simplicity and detail that they carry a conviction that the doctor is telling the perfect truth. Certainly, he does acknowledge in a number of cases that the patient died, but as is often the case with medical men, qualifies the failure by asserting that the patients were brought to him too late!

Still, he was a fine old soul, and a traveller of no mean calibre, who for over 30 years travelled and practised in the principal parts of Europe, Asia, Egypt, and India, experiencing many weird adventurers, of which we can give but brief extracts, of necessity omitting much.

John Martin Honigberger, known in the Khalsa service as " Martin Sahib," was born at Kronstadt about 1795. Having completed his medical training, he set forth in search of a livelihood in the spring of 1815, and after a year's wandering through Europe and Russia, arrived at Varna on the Black Sea, from whence, after a stormy passage, described rather picturesquely, he arrived at Constantinople. He stayed there a few months, when, having obtained an appointment as physician to the Governor of Toscat he travelled to that place in a caravan. He soon tired of this employment, and hearing that another caravan was about to depart for Aleppo, joined

it and passed on to that place, subsisting by the practice of his profession on his fellow travellers and the inhabitants. Soon tiring of Aleppo, he sailed down the Syrian coast, visiting each of the principal ports, and then to Jerusalem.

He left this for Cairo, where he obtained an employment in the Turkish military medical service, which he held for some years. In 1822, plague having broken out in Syria, Honigberger resigned his post, to proceed there to treat and study the malady, in which he became a specialist. He set up in practice in Damascus, as a specialist in plague, small-pox, and stone, of the latter of which he relates some marvellous cures, both with and without anæsthetics or instruments.

For many pages of his book, the doctor maunders on, relating strange medical cases, and cures (or otherwise) with a simplicity always entertaining and occasionally amusing. Presently this inveterate wanderer set out on an antiquarian trip to the Pyramids, but arriving at Alexandria, found the city in the throes of a plague epidemic, of which he relates some very ghastly details. Remaining there until the plague had abated, he returned to Damascus, where he stayed some twelve months longer, until hearing that the Governor of Baghdad required a European physician, he set out with a caravan.

On this journey which was not without many adventures, the doctor, as was the custom in Mahomedan countries, travelled as a devout Mussulman, and to this, and his acquaintance with the Arabic language and several other dialects, attributes his immunity from injury or robbery. He claims acquaintance with eleven separate languages, four of which were Asiatic, and many dialects. On arrival at Baghdad, Honigberger was joyfully received by the Pasha who was urgently in need of his service, for a disease the doctor omits to mention, but in which he remarks that he was a specialist. The desired cure having

been effected, Honigberger was confirmed in his appointment, with the additional charge of the local hospital, of which he speaks very scathingly, for it was but a collection of sheds, devoid of medical appliances or necessaries.

However, he did very well, and gives us instances of some marvellous cures, varying from extracting nests of living insects from within the skull of a living person, to cæsarean operations. After some months he was directed to accompany the Turkish troops sent out to suppress an Arab battalion, and of the atrocities perpetrated on the unfortunate prisoners, and the mounds of heads collected, the doctor speaks most feelingly. Finally convinced "that the Turkish service was not one for peaceful or humane men," Honigberger quitted it, and returned to Baghdad, where he met a merchant who had just come from Lahore, and to whose glowing tales of the prospects for Europeans in Ranjit Singh's service, he listened appreciatively.

Addressing a letter to Avitabile, asking his services Honigberger departed for Bushire, *en route* to Lahore, accompanied by a Frenchman of the curious name of De Turk, who was also desirous of service with the Sikhs. On arrival at Bushire they found that owing to the monsoon, no vessels were sailing for India, and therefore, decided to return to Ispahan and make the journey overland. But, on arrival, Honigberger was impressed for medical service with the Turkish army, setting out to fight the Russians, and the curiously named Frenchman became his assistant. They managed so well as to incur the deadly enmity of the hakims, who planned to assassinate them.

Fortunately, they were apprised of the plot, and fled to Baghdad, where an answer from Avitabile, assuring Honigberger of employment was awaiting him; so, leaving his friend, who had had quite enough of adventure, behind, Honigberger eventually arrived at Karachi, from

whence he travelled to Lahore, *viâ* Multan, both he and his Armenian servant passing as Mussulmans.

Having hitherto only travelled in Shiah country, they were unacquainted with Sunni methods, so to prevent being detected when joining in the prayers, the doctor adroitly overcame the difficulty by affirming that both he and the servant were suffering from a loathsome complaint, which rendered them unfit to associate with pure and orthodox Mussalmans. Whilst at Multan, Honigberger was taken ill of a "putrid" fever, which he cured by an extraordinary method administered in as extraordinary a manner.

Eventually arriving at Lahore, he interviewed Ranjit Singh, who as usual, kept him waiting for some months, an interval the doctor employed by a journey to Kashmir, where he cured Raja Suchet Singh of a long standing complaint of a similar nature to that of the Pasha. Presently he was sent for, and appointed physician in ordinary to the Court, together with charge of the gun-powder and shot factories......a curious combination. He now settled down at Lahore for four years, during which time he effected some extraordinary cures of glanders in human beings, and of hydrophobia, both of which are corroborated by Captain Wade and Doctor Murray, who were in Lahore at the time. Probably the diseases were not far advanced.

Amongst the curious duties entrusted to him was the superintendence of the distillation of a very potent spirit, which he invented for Ranjit Singh's especial delectation, for the Maharajah had lost his taste for ordinary spirit, which he alleged, had no bite. This spirit was so potent that a couple of wineglassfuls knocked over the most seasoned topers amongst the British officers, who were occasionally regaled with it, though for a time the Maharajah indulged freely in it. However, in the end, it proved too much, even for him.

In 1833 an overwhelming nostalgia overcame the doctor, so that he determined to return to Transylvania. Loath to part with Honigberger, for whom he had a sincere liking, Ranjit Singh increased his pay, and offered him charge of a district, " such as Avitabile and Harlan enjoyed. But such was my longing to depart, that not even the Rajah's Koh-i-Noor, valued at Rs. 5,00,000, would have tempted me to remain." From Lahore, he made his way *viâ* Kandahar to Kabul, where he encountered Masson, in company with whom he explored a number of the ancient and curious monuments called topes, found in Afghanistan.

Though Honigberger mentions Masson only casually, it appears that the latter accompanied him as far as Orenburg. His activities aroused the suspicion of Dost Mahomed, who suspecting him of having obtained some treasure from his excavations, had him watched, so taking alarm at this indication of suspicion, Honigberger fled to the frontier of Afghanistan, where he was arrested and imprisoned. However, through the medium of Nawab Jubbar Khan, always a friend to Europeans, he was released, and travelled on to Bokhara, practising his profession with or without reward, and effecting cures, though honestly enough, he admits that a number of cases were unsuccessful.

In addition to free medical attendance on poor people, he ransomed a number of Russian prisoners at his own expense. From Bokhara he passed through Central Asia to Orenburg, and thence to Nijni Novgorod, still passing as a Mussulman. At Nijni he made a speculation in sable skins, and being badly swindled, sought the aid of the Governor, but too late, for the merchant had been before him, so that when Honigberger presented himself, he was arrested as a spy passing as a true believer.

Fortunately, some influential German merchants, got him released on bail, which however, Honigberger

thought it prudent to forfeit, and fled from Nijni by night. Eventually he arrived at St. Petersburg, where he was well received by the Royal family, and finally reached his home in 1834, having been then absent for twenty years. Though he writes pages about the gratification the sight of his relations afforded him, curiously enough he only stayed with them six months, before passing on to visit Hungary, Italy, France, and England, and finally Constantinople, where he again set up in practice.

In 1836, he received a message from Ventura, that Ranjit Singh desired him to return to Lahore, so, abandoning his practice, he met Ventura at Alexandria, and in company with him and Mouton returned to Lahore *viâ* Bombay. On the journey up the party halted at a place called Pali, where plague was endemic, and here the doctor himself contracted the disease, which concealing from his friends, he cured by drastic doses of strychnine, and other measures we need not mention.

On arrival at Lahore he found Ranjit Singh almost at the end, quite dumb and almost paralysed. Though three European doctors had been lent by the British Government, and Ranjit Singh had two others named Harvey and Bennet in attendance, he would take none of their medicines, passing them all on to his servants, but having profound trust in Honigberger, the Maharajah consented to take any medicine the doctor would make up for him in the presence of his personal attendants, and accordingly a mixture of aconite and strychnine mixed with the famous spirit was compounded and administered.

After a few minute doses of this delectable mixture, the patient was able to sit up and speak and in gratitude bestowed upon the doctor a pair of gold bangles and some shawls, altogether in value about Rs. 1,000. His success aroused the jealousy of the hakims, who had Honigberger's medicine discontinued, and one of their own substituted,

which, being composed mostly of powdered diamonds and similar nostrums, soon put an end to the monarch, as was only natural.

After Ranjit Singh's death, Honigberger remained quietly at Lahore, interfering with, and being interfered with by, nobody, though the anarchy was at its height. He witnessed many of the most stirring scenes, including the several stormings of the Fort, and the death of the one-day Maharajah, Nau Nihal Singh, who was killed by the falling-in of an archway, and whom he attended after that accident.

He was present in the garden of the Shah Bulawal, when Maharajah Sher Singh was shot dead, and his son brutally murdered, and of this, amusingly writes :—

"I was by accident not further than ten steps from the place where that murder took place. At the moment I heard the firing of the guns, and perceived people in motion taking their weapons, I was persuaded that the locality was not *an asylum for a tranquil man*, so I looked about for a passage to make my escape from that scene of horror and betake myself to the spot where I had left my horse and servants. These were still waiting at a place close by. I hastened towards them, jumped over the low wall and narrow ditch, and arrived safely. It was by a fortunate chance that I took this direction, for my people afterwards told me that at the great entrance to the garden the bullets hissed and fled about, and they were in anxiety for my life. Thus I was saved in a critical moment by taking a firm resolution without any hesitation."

As with the other Europeans Honigberger was dismissed by Pundit Julla, but remaining in Lahore, was re-engaged on a salary of Rs. 900 per month, after that person's death, and served the Durbar to the end. When in 1849, some British officers and soldiers were taken prisoners at Badowal, they were placed under charge of Honigberger and Brown, and for the doctor's kindness to them he was afterwards thanked by the Government of

India. His services may have been instrumental in his being retained after the fall of the Sikh Raj, and continued in charge of the jail and lunatic asylum, which later he founded.

But, having been long used to independent control, he soon fell out with Dr. McGregor, his British superior, and resigning the service, departed for Kashmir, with the intention of setting up a beet sugar farm, on some land Gulab Singh had offered him. The project did not materialise, so he returned to Lahore and applied to the British Government for a pension. In this matter he was generously treated, for they gave him one of Rs. 500 per month, payable in Europe, and this he enjoyed until his death in 1865.

He was married to a Kashmiri woman, in Lahore, by whom he had two children, who, during his service in Lahore, were educated at Mussoorie, and finally returned to Hungary with him.

Bound up with the memoirs is a comprehensive medical vocabulary and pharmacopea, profusely illustrated by drawings of medical plants. There does not seem to be anything of this nature that he missed, and he discourses lengthily and gravely on the merits of some curious and little known remedies, of whose efficacy we must confess we would be very doubtful.

He was a worthy and simple minded old soul, whose insatiable wanderlust only equalled his zeal for that profession which he loved so well and practiced so worthily.

# CHAPTER XII

## JOSIAH HARLAN

Though several of the Europeans who served Ranjit Singh claimed American nationality, the only one really entitled to it was this versatile and unscrupulous person.

The others were merely British deserters, who claimed such a nationality that the Maharajah might, with an appearance of truth, deny that such men were in his service, for although the British never insisted upon their surrender, they decidedly objected to their entertainment. Nobody was deceived, but an acceptance of the statement saved inconvenient enquiries.

We are enabled to set forth a fairly complete narrative of Harlan's career in the several services of the English, of Ranjit Singh, of Shah Shujah, and of Dost Mahomed, the first by reason of his having been in their military service, and the latter because, coming as he did, soon after the arrival of a second batch of important French officers, the Government of India kept a much closer watch than heretofore on the movements of Europeans in the service of rulers of Northern India. The hiatuses in the official records are supplied by a memoir written by Harlan, and published in the United States in the year 1842.

In this extraordinary concoction of bombastic romance, deliberate perversions, false statements, and virulent abuse of the English, Harlan was most probably actuated by their persistent rejections of his overtures to act as a spy for them, but just as possibly by the Anglophobia displayed by many Americans during the mid decades of the 19th century, and not totally extinct even now.

Those who have read *Martin Chuzzlewit*, published but a few years after Harlan's book, will recognise, on comparing the two, the absolute truth of what was then, and

is even now, called by the Americans, " a malicious satire "; and find in our extracts from Harlan's book under review, and the notice of that about to be published, views and writings worthy of those inimitable personages, Colonel Diver, Jefferson Brick, Hannibal Chollop, and The Water-toast sympathisers.

To those who have not read *Martin Chuzzlewit*, we recommend its immediate perusal, which will enable them to get a truer view of the American " spread eagleism " of that date, of which Harlan and his advertiser are as genuine types as those whom Dickens is alleged to have satirised.

Harlan's narrative, though often turgid and bombastic, has much that repays perusal, for in addition to certain items of real literary merit, it contains others of considerable interest, regarding the manners, customs, and political expedients of the Afghans of that period. Had the Doctor numbered amongst his virtues the predominant one of ordinary truthfulness, he might have ranked as an historian, but, though not so fantastic and monumental a romancer as Gardiner (whose history follows) Harlan cannot be relied upon.

We shall quote liberally from his book, which is entitled—

' A MEMOIR OF INDIA AND AFGHANISTAN.

With observations upon the present critical state and future prospects of those Countries. With an appendix on the fulfilment of a text of Daniel in reference to the present prophetic conditions of Mahomedan nations throughout the world, and the speedy dissolution of the Ottoman Empire :

By

JOSIAH HARLAN,

Late Counsellor of State; Aide-de-Camp, and General of the Staff of Dost Mahomed Khan, Ameer of Kabul.'

The Doctor's predictions are as unreliable as his other statements, for nearly 90 years after his prophecies, the Mussulman nations and races seem to be as virile as ever, and, to hazard a prophecy ourselves, will become increasingly so.

At the end of the book is a lengthy notice, copied from the *United States Gazette*, of August 1842, concerning another book, shortly to be published by Harlan. This, however, never appeared, for the many inaccuracies, to say nothing of the deliberate lies which appeared in the published book, were duly exposed in the English Press, and created such a distrust of the Doctor, that it killed the chances of his future book, which perished still-born.

The notice is so bombastic and amusing that we make no excuse in presenting to our readers copious extracts from the 18 pages of very small close print in which it was conveyed, for it will give our readers a truer idea of the Doctor's mentality, character, and *impudence* than any we could give. The notice commences—

"We are happy to announce that General Harlan is preparing for the press a narrative of his residence and travels in Asia. A sojourn of eighteen years amongst the pagan and Mahomedan communities of the East has afforded the General unequalled opportunities of becoming intimately acquainted with the religious laws and manners of the Oriental, and we are enabled to state with the utmost confidence in our compatriot's *versatile talents*, his abilities for observation and his investigating tact that the projected volume will be interesting and instructing, no less to the philosophical enquirer than to the general reader.

"The General will confine himself chiefly to a history of his personal adventures, though in reference to his travels in remote countries, he will give us the geography and statistics of those countries; also profoundly treating of political questions of the deepest interest in regard to the policy of England and Russia in Central Asia. Amongst the most extraordinary events of General Harlan's career was his passage of the Indian Caucasus in

the year 1838-1839, in command of a division of the Kabul army. We view this expedition as an incident altogether unique since the period of Alexander's conquests

"With this prominent exception, no Christian chief of European descent has ever penetrated so far into the interior of Central Asia under such circumstances as characterise General Harlan's enterprise, and we relinquish the palm to the Macedonian hero alone. Retracing the steps of Alexander, General Harlan has performed a feat which ranks with the passage of the Simplon. For the enterprise, the energy and military genius displayed by our distinguished compatriot, we claim an association with the names of other heroes who have attained celebrity by scaling mountains. The expedition may be viewed as a pioneering feat to prove the existence of a practicable military passage between Kabul and Balkh, the ancient Bactria."

Now, this passage was not only known to, but traversed by, Alexander, with his troops and warlike artillery of those days, such as catapults and trabuchets, which were every bit as unwieldy, if not more so, than the tiny guns carried over the pass by Harlan. Kaye, traversing Harlan's remarks, says* :—

"The Doctor-General, Harlan, boasted that he had crossed the Hindu Kush with artillery. The guns sent along that route were three pounders, whilst ours were six pounders. The troops came across the track of the Amir's guns, and reported that the breadth between the wheels was less than half that of ours.

"The unequivocal success attending this discovery announces to the world in characters of prosperous experiment, written high upon the eternal, snow-capped peaks of the Paropamismus, which pierce their altitudes 18,000 feet above the level of the sea, the accessibility of India to Russia. Should the result lead to, or facilitate the views of, national glory which the history of Russia shows us as the never-tiring and ever-aggrandizing diplomacy of the north, the consequences attending this great enterprise may, and probably will, prove an entering wedge for

* Kaye's War in Afghanistan, Volume I, page 465.

the destruction of the Indo-British Empire, the disintegration of that arrogant and audacious power which wields at this moment an universal sway; of Great Britain, whose pre-eminence is the jealousy of the Christian world; of England, King of Kings, supremely paramount in all views and positions, political and moral, over a reluctant though enthralled community of crowned heads.

"Several titles of honour have been conferred on General Harlan by the Princes of Asia with whom he has seen military service, but our worthy compatriot retains the military title in social life, in consideration of his republican relations, and as we have heard him observe: 'Not to impeach my natural right of critizenship, which I value above all sovereignty.' At the commencement of his career, our enterprising compatriot was a surgeon in the East India Company's service, which he entered at the period of the Burmese War. He served a campaign in the Burmese Empire under General Archibald Campbell, in medical charge of a detachment of Bengal Artillery, under Colonel, now General, Pollock. At the conclusion of the war, having acquitted himself with high reputation, he resigned his appointment.

"The love of travel and ambition of military glory, seduced him from the beaten track of monotonous and supine routine, and he visited Kabul, with a view, amongst other motives, to personal adventure, to improve the opportunities of diplomatic distinction, which the occasion offered, he received from Shah Shujah, the legitimate, though exiled, king of Kabul, then residing at Ludhiana, as a stipendiary, on the bounty of the English Government, the powers of a secret agent, in which he was commissioned and stimulated to raise Afghanistan in favour of the true King.

"Boldness is the grand secret of success in diplomacy. General Harlan failed in an attempt to seize a strong fort on the Indus, where he says: 'I should instantly, and no doubt successfully, have proclaimed the King. Failing in this I proceeded to Kabul in the disguise of a dervish, and before commencing the train of operations which were to result in the change of a dynasty, to dethrone the occupant, and restore an antiquated pretender, I became a guest in the house of the reigning prince's brother, Jubbar Khan,

under whose patronage, and by whose assistance, I determined to effect my purpose.'

"Let no Christian be deceived by the fraternal appellation. Amongst the customs of the Orientals we meet with strange perversions of our commonest principles, and the term brother, which in a community sprung from a system of polygamy, means a natural enemy, a domestic adversary, expectant heir of a capricious parent contending for mastery in the disturbed areas of family feuds, and any other signification of conflicting import with the king, affections and fraternal love, the union of design and submissive regard prevalent for the most part amongst Christians.

"In the course of seven years' intrigue, which resulted in the restoration of Shah Shujah (but in which Harlan had neither influence nor agency) he resided at Lahore in the service of Ranjit Singh, and he acquitted himself so successfully in the honorary service of Shah Shujah that the exiled monarch, to attest his profound appreciation of his agent's abilities, distinguished him with the title of 'Unees-ud-Dowlah Bahadur,' which we learn from the General's explanation implies, 'The King's nearest friend,' and is a title of nobility beyond which there is no more exalted at an Oriental court. In all the firmauns subsequently addressed to him by Shah Shujah, he is designated, 'Mukarrib-ul-Khakan, Unees-ud-Dowlah Bahadur,' literally Companion of the Imperial Stirrup, and nearest friend of the Empire, the Brave.

"During his residence at Ranjit Singh's court with the Prince of the Punjab, he was Governor of the provinces of Jesrota and Noorpur, two districts then newly subjugated to Lahore, and located on the skirts of the Himalayan mountains. Subsequently he was invested by Ranjit Singh with a sanad, an elephant, and a magnificent dress of honour in the presence of the Vizier, Raja Suchet Singh, and General Allard (the former investing him) and despatched to the Government of Gujrat in command of a brigade of infantry, and with artillery.

"After seven years' residence in the enjoyment of wealth, and the luxury of the most sumptuous court in Asia, he left the Punjab, and entered the service of Dost Mahomed, the reigning prince of Kabul. He was received

by Dost Mahomed with much the same feeling of exultation that the King of Persia is known to have indulged in when his court was visited by Themistocles, for General Harlan was dissatisfied with Ranjit Singh (the feeling was more than mutual) and says, ' Monarch as he was, absolute and luxurious, and voluptuous in the possession of treasured wealth and military power, I resolved to avenge myself and cause him to tremble in the midst of his magnificence.' Dost Mahomed received Harlan as a brother, ever addressed him by that title, seated him in the Dewan or Durbar at his side, gave him the command of his regular troops with the title of Sir-i-Lashkar, or General-in-Chief, and Mussahib, or Aide-de-Camp. At his instigation war was declared against Ranjit Singh ; a campaign was projected, and a great battle fought at Jamrud.

" The Sikhs were defeated, Ranjit Singh's commander-in-chief (Hari Singh) with 2,000 of his men killed, and only 1,000 Afghans. The proud king of Lahore quailed upon his threatened throne, as he exclaimed with terror : ' This is all Harlan's work : he has avenged himself.' Indeed, the old prince's infirmities were so much aggravated by the disgrace of defeat that, from the date of his misfortune, he declined more rapidly, and never rose again to the former ambitious and energetic spirit. The year after this victory, Harlan was despatched by the Prince of Kabul to make war upon the Prince of Kunduz in Tartary, with whom Dost Mahomed had long been at variance. It was in the execution of this enterprise that he performed the feat now described.

" ' I surmounted the Indian Caucasus, and thereupon the mountain height's unfurled my country's banner to the breeze, under a salute of twenty-six guns On the highest peak of the frosty Caucasus, that of Kharazar, 12,500 feet above the sea, the Star-Spangled Banner gracefully waved amidst the icy peaks and soilless, rugged rocks of a sterile region, seemingly sacred to the solitude of an undisturbed serenity. We ascended passes through regions where glaciers and silent dells, and frowning rocks, blackened ages of weatherbeaten fame, preserved the quiet domain of remotest time, shrouded in perennial snow.

" 'We struggled on amidst the heights of those Alpine regions, until now supposed inaccessible to the labour of man infantry and cavalry, artillery, camp-followers, beasts of burden, surmounting difficulties by obdurate endurance, defying the pitiless pelting of snow and rain, as these phenomena alternately and capriciously coquetted with our very changing climate, we pressed onward, scaling those stony girdles of the earth, dim shades as children of the mists, far above the nether world, toiling amidst the clouds, like restless spirits of another sphere, thus accomplishing the passage over a mountain district 300 miles in extent from Kabul to Balkh.'

"The journal of this route minutely records geography, topography, and military capabilities of the Paropamismus, and forms a valuable work upon that highly interesting portion of Central Asia. We have been permitted to extract from this journal the following interesting notice of an interview with the independent princes of the Paropamismus, or Hazara Jaut, known to history by the name of Ghoree (Ghorband?).

"It will be seen that our distinguished fellow citizen is in effect the Prince of Ghoree, although we are aware that the general looks upon kingdoms and principalities as of frivolous importance when set in opposition to the more honourable and estimable title of *American Citizen*."

Truly magnificent! Even in his most supreme moments Jefferson Brick never approached this splendid effort. To resume—

" 'When at Kaumerd, on my expedition to Balkh, my camp was visited by the princes of the Hazara Jaut of Ghoreè: Mahomed Ruffee Beg, Yenghoreah of Sook-jui, Dye Zungee, whose possessions are the capital of Ghoree. Accompanying him was his brother, Yakub Beg of Lall, and Meer Mohib of Takhannah, near Yakaolang. These princes were accompanied by several of their most faithful retainers to the amount of about 300 cavalry. They were men of noble bearing and athletic forms; they were decorated in very good taste with Kashmere shawl turbans and girdles, scarlet chogas, embroidered with gold, and their persons were garnished with Persian swords, daggers and pistols stuck around their waists in their belts, like the

bristling small arms arranged round the mizzen mast of a sloop of war.

" 'Every man was a human frigate, freighted with belligerent portentous impulses, and this imposing *tout ensemble* was intended to make a corresponding impression on the weak minds of the Afghans; but they had to astonish men in no way inferior to themselves, and in their turn were overwhelmed with amazement to witness the display of power, the unanimity of tactical science, the complete facility and precision so indicative of military force in the manœuvres of regular troops, the grasp of authority in the invincible command so strangely differing from feudal irregularity with which they were familiar; the order of discipline and the general soul subduing grandeur of a military review upon the minds of semi-barbarians, acquainted with a circumscribed experience acquired amongst their own crags and dells.

" 'These princes invited me collectively and individually to visit them in their native fastnesses, where their mountains are known to contain certain useless wealth in unwrought ores of valuable metal. Mahomed Ruffee Beg, the Chief of Ghoree, now Yenghoreah, secretly arranged a treaty with me, by which he proposed a conquest of the Hazara tribes. He transferred his principality to me in feudal service, binding himself and his tribe to pay tribute for ever, stipulating that he should be made Vizier. The absolute and complete possession of his government was legally conveyed according to legal form by a treaty which I have still preserved.

" 'There was an article in the treaty by which I was bound to raise, organise, and discipline a regular force of infantry and artillery for the pay and maintenance of which the revenues of the country were an adequate appropriation, and he, the Ghoree chief, pledged the fidelity of himself, his heirs and tribes, in feudal tenure to serve, obey, and pay tribute for ever.

" 'The sovereignty was secured to me and my heirs, and the Vizarat for himself and his heirs. I then reviewed my division in their presence, and the display of military pomp and concentrated power of discipline now practically exhibited to them, and the reputation of having

taken the Rock of Aornos (the Fortress of Sykaun) heretofore acknowledged the impregnable defence of the Uzbek frontier, made the strongest impression on Ruffee Beg, and set before him a splendid perspective of conquest, dominion, and glory.' "

Having struggled forth from the turgid flood of the Doctor's bombastic eloquence, let us point out a few devastating inaccuracies in his lofty screed. Firstly, the Afghans were never disciplined in the European, or any other fashion, the most they would submit to being casual training as gunners, and even in this were far inferior to the Sikh or Mussulman. For a true description of what the Afghan armed forces actually were, we refer you to Court's memoir. Secondly, why did Mahomed Ruffee Beg give away not only his own supposed territory, but that of his neighbours, to an alien stranger, who merely commanded (for Dost Mahomed) a ragged mob of Afghan tribesmen, accompanied by a few tiny guns? Thirdly, the revenues of Hazara were yearly collected by Haji Khan, on behalf of Dost Mahomed, as a reference to Masson will show. Fourthly, the imposing and stately review, which so impressed the Hazara chiefs, is totally untruthful, as shown by a second statement, and, lastly, the Rock of Aornos, which Harlan so definitely places, has not yet been definitely identified, though Sir Aurel Stein seems to have come fairly near to it, and the Fort of Sighan was described as a ruin by Masson seven years before Harlan's supposed conquest of it. To continue :—

" The political convulsions that suddenly ensued in the invasion of Afghanistan by the English; the deposition of Dost Mahomed, who fled into Tartary, and vainly endeavoured to excite a religious war amongst the Uzbegs against the English; the restoration of the old regime in the person of Shah Shujah, who had been thirty years in exile, were events which left General Harlan at liberty to revisit his own country. Previous to the flight of Dost Mahomed, that prince had constituted Harlan Generalis-

simo of his forces, and himself assumed a subordinate position in the contemplated arrangements for meeting and opposing Shah Shujah and the British. The fall of Ghuznee produced a moral impression which could not be withstood by the resources and military array of Dost Mahomed, and he precipitately retreated."

Once again the Doctor's soaring fancy has led him far beyond the domains of the sober truth, which was that such military command as he did hold was very unimportant. The Afghan commanders who opposed the British were Akbar Khan at the Khyber, Hyder Khan at Ghuznee, and Afzul Khan with another body between Kabul and Ghuznee. The retreat from Arghandeb is graphically described by Harlan in a narrative concerning which Kaye comments*—

"General Harlan has written an account of the desertion of Dost Mahomed by his followers at Arghandeb, which only wants a conviction of its entire truth to be extremely interesting. It is really a piece of fine writing, though perhaps rather flamboyant."

Harlan writes—

"It was about the time of afternoon prayer. The Prince started from his couch, where unslumbering and fearful forebodings fruitlessly solicited a hopeless rest. A trusty servant of Khan Shireen Khan, the hereditary Lord who commanded the Royal guard of Kizzilbash, or Persian mercenary cavalry, appeared...... 'Sahib,' said the messenger, abruptly entering the Presence, 'the Khan sends me here with this advice:

"'Still you are here? Arise, for my followers have betrayed a mutinous spirit; another moment's delay may be fatal to your chance of escape. I can no longer be responsible for your personal safety.'

"The Prince, more wounded by the threatening language of his feudatory than scathed by the prospect of entire ruin, mildly, though with a countenance of fire, called for his attendant, whose duty at the stated period

* Kaye's War in Afghanistan, Volume I, page 461.

of prayer should have brought him into his Presence. But a fallen prince has not even a faithful slave. A stranger handed the vessel for His Highness's ablution, and he mournfully performed, for the last time within his tent, the ceremonials of his religion. His prayers finished, he commenced putting up his turban, his horse ready caparisoned at the door of his tent. He called for the keeper of the powder magazine, who presented himself with an inventory of his charge:

" 'Go! Go!' said he, 'to Mahomed Afzal (his son), he has my orders.'

" A crowd of noisy disorganised troops insolently pressed up the royal pavilion......the guards had disappeared; the groom holding the Prince's horse was unceremoniously pushed to and fro; a servant audaciously pulled away the pillow which sustained the Prince's arm; another commenced cutting a piece of the splendid Persian carpet, the beautiful praying rug of the Prince was seized by a third.

" 'Hold!' cried His Highness, 'Will ye not give me time to put on my head-dress?'

" A dark scowl of despair met his eye from those who were wont to fawn on his kindness, and flatter the once potent chief. Truly, as the dark gathering of murky clouds forebode the storm that follows, the frowning visages of audacious disrespect no longer dimly obscured the motives of cupidity. As the Prince sallied from his tent, he said to Ghulam Mahomed:

" 'Take all you find inside, together with the tent.'

" In a moment the unruly crowd descended upon the pavilion; swords gleamed in the air, and descended upon the tent; the canvas, ropes, carpets, pillows, screens, etc., were seized and dispensed amongst the plunderers.

" The Prince placed his foot in the stirrup, as his loaded mules passed in a line bearing the furniture of his cuisine. Quickly, glances were interchanged between the followers of Khan Shireen Khan and Mahomed Khan, formerly the nearest friends to a prosperous prince, but now the rifest enemies of a fallen friend. These monitory signals escaped not the penetrating glance of Dost

Mahomed. Suddenly he sprang into the saddle. As the turbulent host pressed upon the fugitive prince, and whilst they were engaged in hostile strife with each other for a division of the spoil of his kitchen furniture, the first report of an explosion concentrated the interrupted attention of the disorganised army, which was seen divided into immense swarms and hordes, each suspiciously regarding the other with inquiring looks.

"Another and another explosion followed: the magazine had been fired. Not a breath of air disturbed the clear atmosphere; a dense cloud of white smoke ascended by jets far into the upper space, in a circumscribed pillar, as each concussion of ignited powder drove up a herald to announce, in other worlds, the crash of empires on earth beneath.

"An immense cloud rose into the still, clear air, like a genii conjured up by the magic of war. The Prince turned his horse towards that dense cloud, which seemed like a shadow enshrining his glory; plunged into the screening veil that obscured his fallen fortunes; and protected him from pursuit, as he lost himself from the view of those who wistfully contemplated an act of treachery in the seizure of His Highness' person."

Having given Harlan the freest scope to state his own case let us set down the actual facts from the time he came to India.

When the Burmese War of 1824 broke out the British Government being short of surgeons engaged a number of temporary hands to fill the vacancies. Harlan duly passed the test, and was appointed to the Bengal establishment in July 1824. In January 1825 he was sent to Rangoon with a detachment of Bengal Artillery and remained at that station until August 1825, when he was invalided back to India. He served with Native Infantry at various stations, his last being Karnal, and was on leave at Ludhiana when the order was issued for the dismissal of all the temporary surgeons. Concerning his career with the British Kaye writes*—

* Kaye's War in Afghanistan, Volume I, page 230.

" Harlan does not appear to have obtained a very good name during his connection with the Company's army which he soon quitted." He continues: " He then obtained service with Ranjit Singh and afterwards with Dost Mahomed whom he foully betrayed." There seems no proof of the latter assertion, unless Kaye was thinking of the Khyber negotiations mentioned later when Harlan was in the Afghan camp as a messenger from Ranjit Singh.

Harlan quite frequently appears in the Punjab Records though seldom creditably. The first mention runs* :—

" *October 15th, 1827.*—Dr. Harlan, lately an officiating surgeon on the establishment, who came to Ludhiana a short time ago with permission to cross the Sutlej, has now left Ludhiana, with a view of proceeding to Peshawar, *viâ* Bahawalpur. Dr. Harlan's principal object in wishing to visit the Punjab was in the first place to enter Ranjit Singh's service, and ultimately to pursue some investigation regarding the natural history of that country, but failing in his attempt to procure a passport from the Maharajah he has taken the route *viâ* Bahawalpur, and will endeavour to cross the river at that place.

" Previous to his departure, Dr. Harlan proposed to communicate his progress to me as opportunities might offer, and should his communications contain anything of interest to the Government, I shall consider it my duty to report."

The inference is obvious. In plain English, Harlan was offering to act as a spy at Kabul for the English.

Now contrast this sober account of his departure from Ludhiana with the following, as related to Dr. Wolff† :—

" On arriving at Gujrat, Wolff was taken to the palace of the Governor. Whilst waiting in the entrance hall, he heard someone singing Yankee Doodle with the true American snuffle. Presently in came the Governor himself, who was a fine tall man, dressed in European

* Punjab Records, Book No. 95, letter No. 127.
† Wolff's Travels, Volume II, page 261.

clothing and smoking a hookah. Wolff asked him how he came to know Yankee Doodle, when he answered in nasal tones : 'I am a free citizen of the United States, from the City of Philadelphia. I am the son of a Quaker. My name is Josiah Harlan.'

"In his early life, Harlan had studied surgery, but he went out in a ship to Canton. He then returned to America, where he had intended to marry a lady to whom he was engaged; but she played him false. He then went to India, and landing in Calcutta, secured a post with the British Army, and tried to make himself King of Afghanistan, but though he actually took a fort, he was defeated at last by a force sent against him by Ranjit Singh, who took him prisoner. Ranjit Singh, seeing his talents, said to him—

"'I will make you Governor of Gujrat. If you behave well, I will increase your salary. If not, I will cut off your nose.'

"The fact of his nose being entire, proved that he had done well."

Harlan's talents as a romancer are evident. The truth was that he left Ludhiana as a spy for Shah Shujah, who must have paid his expenses, for unless provided with funds from some such source he could not have reached Kabul, or stayed there without employment. We are also of opinion that he continued as such during his whole career, and evened up matters by impartial betraying each to the other in the cases of Ranjit Singh, Dost Mahomed, and the British.

From Kabul he sent in many letters to Captain Wade, who, however, as the following shows, soon saw through his game* :—

"*3rd February, 1829.*—In forwarding a letter from Dr. Harlan at Kabul, I suggest that no further communication be held with him, as in my opinion he is merely endeavouring to impose on the Afghans as a British Agent, and letters from us will help him to impose on these simple people."

* Punjab Records, Book No. 115, letter No. 49.

Failing to obtain any employment at Kabul he came from thence to Lahore where he arrived in March 1829. The news-writer in reporting his arrival remarks* that Harlan seemed to be well provided with funds, and did not seem at all anxious for employment. This pose was about the best thing to adopt with Ranjit Singh, for the more eager a man was for employment the longer he kept him hanging about in suspense. He soon became very popular with the Sirdars whom he treated medically, probably making quite a good thing out of it. For some months he remained at Lahore, displaying a like indifference until Ranjit Singh, piqued at it, offered him employment. Concerning this Captain Wade writes†—

"Mr. Harlan is still at Lahore. I hear the Maharajah offered to employ him on Rs. 1,000 per month, but there were other conditions attaching to the offer which prevented Mr. Harlan from accepting it. The Maharajah wished to make a soldier of him, and gave him the Brigade vacant by the death of Senor Oms, the Spaniard. Mr. Harlan replied that he was a doctor, and not desirous of permanent employment, but that his main object was to proceed to Calcutta and embark for his own country, the U. S. A.

"If, however, he wished to detain him, he had no objection to remaining for a few months, and then be allowed to depart. Should Mr. Harlan be really desirous of establishing himself at Lahore, he probably considers that apparent indifference presents the best chance of success. The people about the court appear to consult him frequently, and to have considerable confidence in his medical abilities; but it occurs to me that Ranjit Singh is not inclined to offer Mr. Harlan sufficient temptation to stay permanently with him. Active, intelligent, military officers are the men to whom he looks for the gratification of the career of war and conquest which is the engrossing object of his mind."

Harlan's indifference, or patience, was rewarded in December, 1829, when he was appointed Governor of

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* Punjab Records, Book No. 97, letter No. 68.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 97, letter No. 120.

Nurpur and Jesrota on a salary of Rs. 1,000 a month. He remained there until May, 1832, in which month, Sohan Lal records that—

*" *May, 1832*.—Harlan Sahib is appointed Governor of Gujrat. The Maharajah called him to the Durbar, and after appointing him, fixed his salary at Rs. 1,200 per month, and took a contract from him, which was signed, sealed, and deposited in the archives. He swore upon his Bible that so long as he lived he would continue to serve the Maharajah, would do nothing foreign to his interests, discharge all his duties faithfully, even to fighting against his own country, and such orders as were received from Raja Dhian Singh would be implicitly obeyed as if they had been given direct by the Maharajah himself."

Harlan's career as a civil governor was not free from reproach, for both the vernacular records, the Punjab Records, and the books of contemporary writers, find him guilty of extortion and oppression. Only two months after his appointment, Sohan Lal records that Harlan was called to court, and received a stern injunction to mend his ways, after several reports from zamindars had been read to him. This statement is corroborated by Lawrence who remarks that—

†" Mr. Harlan was once trusted by Ranjit Singh. He was chiefly employed in the Gujrat district, but says his unflinching firmness lost him his service. He is a man of considerable ability, great courage and enterprise, and though, judging by appearances, well cut out for partisan work, he was dismissed in no flattering terms. He had also but little success with the Afghans."

Dr. Honigberger attributes another accomplishment to Harlan, which may, or may not, be true, but as the doctor owns that he cordially disliked Harlan, we must take the statement with a reservation—

‡" Ranjit Singh told me that Harlan used to employ his time in the transmutation of metals, at which I laughed

* Sohan Lal's Diary of contemporary date.
† Adventurers in the Punjab, page 28.
‡ Thirty-five Years in the East, page 55.

and derided his faith. Subsequently my assertions were verified, for he discovered that Harlan was making false money."

That throughout his career with the various rulers of Northern Asia Harlan kept up correspondence with Shah Shujah, and as proof we read that in 1833, Shah Shajah, then about to embark upon his abortive attempt to recapture his throne, had, in addition to the battalions under Dick and Campbell, expected to raise another under Harlan, who was to join him with 500 men and a lakh of rupees. Neither materialised.

We now come to an episode, which though to the ordinary man it would appear anything but one to be proud of, emphasises Harlan's peculiar mentality—

" On the occasion of Dost Mahomed's visit to Peshawar, which occurred during the period of my service with Ranjit Singh, I was despatched by this prince as ambassador to the Amir. I divided his brothers against him, exciting their jealousy of his growing prosperity and exasperating the family feuds, with which, from my previous acquaintance with the family, I was perfectly familiar, and stirred up the feudal lords of the durbar with the prospect of pecuniary advantages. I induced his brother, Sultan Mahomed Khan, the lately deposed chief of Peshawar, to withdraw suddenly from his camp about nightfall with 10,000 retainers. The chief accompanied me towards the Sikh camp, whilst his followers fled to their mountain fastnesses.

" So large a body retiring from the Amir's control in opposition to his will, and without previous intimation, threw the general camp into inextricable confusion, which terminated in the clandestine rout of his forces, without beat of drum or sound of bugle, or the trumpet blast in the quiet stillness of midnight. At daybreak no vestige of Afghan camp was to be seen, where, six hours before, 50,000 hillmen and 10,000 horses, with all the busy tumult of attendants, were rife with the tumult of wild confusion."

Masson, who, despite Sir Henry Lawrence, nothing extenuates nor sets down ought in malice, writes thus of this episode* :—

"Mr. Harlan did not find the Amir as facile as his brother, and was upbraided for his interference in matters which did not concern him, and for promoting dissension. Mr. Harlan found it necessary to send the Amir a Koran, and to make many promises in allusion to which Mirza Sami Khan remarked that Feringhees were like trees, full of leaves, but bearing no fruit, which he considered a very happy allusion. Mr. Harlan, after witnessing a review, was doubtless glad to receive permission to pass over into the Sikh camp from whence he came."

To continue Harlan's account of this transaction—

"Dost Mahomed's army consisted of 50,000 musketeers, comprising a large portion of the undisciplined, but able-bodied, populace of his principality. He boasted to me that he was followed by 100,000 armed men at the moment I entered his camp, and I remarked that, 'If the Prince of the Punjab chose to assemble his militia, he could bring ten times the number into the field, but you will have regular troops to fight, and your *sans culotte* militia will vanish like mist before the sun.' "

Harlan's memory served him badly, for but a year later he describes this same *sans culotte* militia as a well armed and highly efficient army, whose co-ordinated movements highly impressed the Hazara chiefs, and in which he was General of Staff! The Afghan army was never more than a miscellaneous collection of semi-independent ruffians, quite untrained, and heterogeneously armed. Some carried jezails, some match-locks, and others flint-lock muskets, in addition to the deadly Afghan knife and round shield, which formed the principal arm of all the men.

The system of attack was desultory sniping, from a long distance, followed by a confused and swift rush, which failing, ended the battle. The tribes owed a loose

* Masson's Travels in Baluchistan, etc.

allegiance to the Amir and but little more to their own chiefs, and, in battle, each tribe or clan acted almost independently. In all the records of Afghan battles or fights, there is no evidence of any definite plan or co-ordination, either of attack or defence, and to speak of officer or staff in connection with such a rabble, is utterly ridiculous. However, to continue—

"I spoke in an exalted strain of the efficiency of the Sikh army, and displayed the wealth and efficiency of Ranjit's military force in a light which made the Amir's spirit recoil. He lost his temper, which he easily did, and then his eyes glared upon me as he replied with a characteristic shake of the head and elevated eyebrows, all of which was to indicate a reckless wilfulness of design—

"'Your appearance in the midst of my camp at this moment of general excitement may be attended with personal danger. When Secunder (Alexander) visited this country, he sent a confidential agent to the Prince hereabout, and the mountaineers murdered his ambassador.'

"Feeling myself strong in the friendship of his brothers, and intimacy of his most influential chiefs, I answered roughly—

"'I am not accredited to you, but to your brother, who is now a guest among you, as I am myself.'

"This expression, which intimated my knowledge of the discord prevailing in his domestic affairs, exasperated the Amir to say—

"'My brother........who is the brother independent of my will? Is not the policy of my court controlled by myself that the enemy sends an ambassador to another in the midst of my camp? Know that I AM ALL IN ALL!'

"And upon this arrogant pretension I planned and accomplished his defeat."

After this expedition, Harlan returned to his Governorship, where, with the exception of a few reports concerning Ranjit Singh's health during the next year or so, we hear nothing of him. Apparently he kept the British authorities fully conversant with the state of affairs at the

court of Lahore, whether paid for it or not. It was in his medical capacity that the episode occurred which caused his downfall, of which there are several accounts. Sohan Lal, under date April, 1836, writes*—

"Harlan Sahib announced himself as an alchemist, and the Maharajah having an attack of paralysis of the tongue, Harlan said he would cure him. The Maharajah sent a trusty courtier to Harlan at Wazirabad, who, asserting his ability to cure, stipulated for Rs. 1,00,000, telling the messenger to bring the money in advance with him, as he did not trust the Maharajah. This message being conveyed to Ranjit Singh, he was beside himself with rage, and gave orders that Harlan should be stripped and put across the Sutlej; which was done."

Major McGregor, who must have derived his information from hearsay, as he wrote ten years later, mentions that Harlan demanded £5,000 "an attempt at extortion which naturally disgusted his Royal client, who lost no time in directing Harlan to leave his dominions threatening to wreak dire vengeance on him if he did not do so†."

Dr. Honigberger remarks that Harlan had to leave the Punjab hurriedly because Ranjit Singh detected him in making false money. In any case the reports agree that the real cause was that stated by Major McGregor. The Political Assistant at Ludhiana in reporting Harlan's arrival makes some caustic comments—

"*17th October, 1836*‡.—Mr. Harlan who was for many years in the Sikh service quitted it a short time ago and came to Ludhiana. After remaining some time he set out for Bahawalpore with the intention of joining Dost Mahomed at Kabul, a place he has visited before as Government is aware. His declared intention is to bring down an army to avenge himself on his former master for the injuries he has received (he says) at his hands. He is an eccentric, and undoubtedly an enterprising man; but that he has the talent to gain such an ascendancy over the ruler

* Sohan Lal's Diary of contemporary date.
† History of the Sikhs, Volume I, page 274.
‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 142, letter No. 78.

at Kabul as will enable him to carry out his threat, is, in my opinion, more than doubtful."

It is indeed curious to note that, though Harlan had befooled Dost Mahomed in the Khyber negotiations, that ruler was quite willing to receive him into his service. Probably he thought that Harlan's knowledge of Khalsa politics, sirdars, and army might be useful to himself. But to judge by the following extract from a Kabul news-letter published in Calcutta Journal of 1838, his position in the Afghan army, if it could be called such, was never very important* :—

"Nawab Abdus Samad, Commander-in-Chief of the Kabul foot troops, has been dismissed with great disgrace having been stripped of every fraction by the Amir for faults committed at Jalalabad. The command of the foot troops has fallen on Mr. Rattray, who has the first regiment, and Mr. Harlan, who has the second regiment as a temporary measure." What Rattray's regiment was like is described in his memoir; Harlan's may have been similar!

Harlan's claim to have been a councillor to Dost Mahomed may be correct, for these durbars were open affairs to which every person of any importance was admitted, and free to give an opinion. But whether he was admitted to the inner councils which regulated the state policy and guided the Amir's affairs, does not seem clear. He also claims to have been commissioned by Dost Mahomed to treat with Sir William Macnaghten and Burnes. He *may* have been, for a man in the position of Dost Mahomed would naturally depute a European who, by virtue of his race, might be supposed to have a better chance of being heard than one of his own Afghan Sirdars.

If so, the hope was soon dashed, for Burnes flatly declined to have anything to do with Harlan, and, as Harlan admits, sent his letters back unopened. It is possible that he may have encouraged Dost Mahomed to

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* Calcutta Journal, 1838, page 77.

believe him a person of weight with the British, and that when the Amir found out his real position he treated Harlan as Havelock mentions*—

" There were two adventurers of European origin, British and American, attached to Dost Mahomed previous to our occupation of his capital...............Harlan, the American, belonged to the medical profession, and was treated by the Amir with unmerited severity previous to his flight from Urghundeb.........We found him in Kabul when we took possession of it."

Dr. Kennedy of the British forces who was with them in Kabul speaks thus of Harlan† :—

" There was at this time in Kabul a certain ' free and enlightened citizen of the greatest and most glorious country in the world ' in the person of a Dr. Harlan, who through various vicissitudes of fortune had left a ship which had carried a cargo of ' notions ' to what is called in Indian phraseology the ' Eastward,' that is, the Malacca Straits and China Seas, and had joined in some subordinate capacity the British Army in the Burmese War.

" I cannot trace him through the native sources to Lucknow (*sic*), and the Punjab and Kabul, where he was a Brigadier in Dost Mahomed's Army which he quitted to join us.

" I met him one morning at Sir Alexander Burnes', and was surprised to find a wonderful fund of local knowledge and great shrewdness in a tall manly figure with a large head and gaunt face, dressed in a light shining pea jacket of green silk, maroon coloured small clothes, buff boots, a silver lace girdle fastened with a great silver buckle larger than a soldier's breast plate, and on his head a white catskin foraging cap with a glittering gold band, precisely the figure that in my youth would have been the pride and joy of a Tyrolean Pandean pipe band.

" Though he dressed like a mountebank this gentleman was no fool, and it will not be creditable to our Government if he is not provided for, as there is no law making it penal

* Kaye's War in Afghanistan, Volume II, page 145.

† Army of the Indus, pages 118—120.

to have served against us, and the President and Congress would have required an answer at our hands had we made it so. Dr. Harlan left the *ex*-ruler to join our advance when his presence in Ghuznee, or at the Bolan Pass, might have produced quite a different issue; so he has a claim to our justice, for it was through his courage and conduct alone that the Afghans defeated the Sikhs in the Khyber Pass in 1837, and he was considered quite a fortunate leader of Afghan soldiery."

To judge by the references to Lucknow and other native states Harlan must have given Dr. Kennedy another version of his imaginary Odyssey. His impudence in claiming the sole credit for the defeat of the Sikhs at Jumrood is edifying, for though, like all the Europeans in Dost Mahomed's service, he was present with the Afghans, the man responsible for the Sikh defeat was Rattray.

Harlan was sent back to India with the troops not required for the permanent garrison to be left at Kabul until Shah Shujah was firmly established. After a short detention at Ludhiana he was deported to Calcutta, and from thence provided with a free passage to America at the expense of the country he never lost an opportunity of vilifying. We conclude our sketch with another extract from his book, a gem that excites our admiration. What we specially admire is the impudence of the man in attributing false faith and dissimulation to Sir William Macnaghten, who, whatever he may have been guilty of in the matter of misguided politics, was in false faith and dissimulation a mere novice to Harlan, who not only confesses to such tactics but glories in them—

"In the beginning those who now govern India were an association of traders, a body of commercial adventurers, a band of hucksters, natives of a small contemptible island (as were his own ancestors) in the Western Ocean. Having tasted the luxuries of Asia, enjoyed the profits of a voyage to India, and beheld the munificent rivers of wealth which flowed from exhaustles sources, these future conquerors lowly and submissively with unpretending

humility solicited permission to trade with their dominions (of the Moguls?)

"The feeble Indians simply cherished with hospitable designs the starving snake which was to bask hereafter in their vitals, to batten on the blood of their people, and to fertilise futurity with the plunder of their treasure. The Indians say that they craved only enough land as might be enclosed by a cowhide. The favour was granted, but the claimants artfully shredded their hide into strings, thus artfully enclosing a considerable space, upon which a factory or fort was created, and they became for 150 years the unmolested possessors of a malignant plague spot on the disc of a threatened Empire."

The Doctor General is vague in his history, mixed in his metaphors and tangled in his similes. The first English factory was at Surat, a place which did not become British territory until the fall of the Moguls. If he was thinking of Madras this certainly was leased to the English by the Naik of Madraspatam in August 1639, but became their property by purchase a few years later. The legend of the shredded cowhide is a classical one, and absolutely untrue as applied to the English in India.

After the publication of the book we have quoted from so extensively Josiah Harlan faded into the obscurity he merited.



Colonel Alexander Gardner at the age of 79.

# CHAPTER XIII

## ALEXANDER GARDINER

In the year 1864, Mr. Cooper, an Indian Civil Servant, celebrated for his ruthless annihilation of a rebel sepoy regiment with the aid of a few policemen, was deputed to Kashmir for the summer.

At Srinagar, he learnt of the existence of an old European, then a pensioner of the Kashmir Government, and formerly an officer in the forces of Dhian Singh, Ranjit Singh, and Gulab Singh. Having made his acquaintance, Cooper became so interested in the ancient's tales of bloody and long past history that he set down some account of Gardiner and his career himself, and also interested others. The results were that an article entitled, " A Soldier of the Olden Time," was published in 1883 by Sir Henry Durand*, and following this, in the year 1898, Major Hugh Pearse published a complete memoir entitled, " Alexander Gardiner, Traveller and Soldier."

The material was said to have been collected from information supplied by Gardiner himself, and notes taken by Cooper. The author bewails the absence of a diary, which Gardiner was said to have written during many years of travelling, and carried about with him disguised as a Koran. Unfortunately, Gardiner had lent the major portion of this diary to Alexander Burnes, with whom it was burnt when that officer was murdered at Kabul in 1841.

In support of Gardiner's statements, the testimony of Sir Richard Temple and Sir Henry Durand is adduced, as well as that of some eminent 19th century geographers, or travellers, some of whom were said to have come into contact with Gardiner. Sir Henry Durand wrote†—

* Life of Sir Henry Durand, Volume II, pages 230—37.
† Life of Sir Henry Durand, Volume II, pages 236—37.

"Even in outline, Gardiner's story is full of interest. A life drama indeed, as full of incident and adventure as a drama can well be. The story of Dugald Dalgetty is nothing to this. To take the two ends of the long tangled line is something wonderful. The one bright and sunny, on the banks of Lake Superior in the Far West; the other approaching where the chapter will close, on the banks of the Indus. *Schooling and teaching* in Lahore; the parting from home for ever for a life from end to end as full of such perils as few men have ever *imagined*, much less known. There may be difficulty in comprehending all the career, but much may be understood.

"But there is no mistake about the high heart, the undaunted courage, the unflagging will. Colonel Gardiner's magnetic influence must have been great. That such a man should have been so little mentioned in the history of the times is a marvel. But we must remember that he was a man without country, though England or any other country might have been glad to claim him.

"Faithful to his standard, *whatever that might have been*, observing *without question* military orders, he presented, and perhaps still presents, one of the *finest specimens* ever known of the soldier of fortune."

Sir Richard Temple is as enthusiastic as Durand. He remarks*—

"Gardiner's life history, though not so complete as it might have been under the auspices of the narrator himself, well deserves the attention of our rising manhood in the British Isles. Though not relating to the British dominions, or the British service itself, it shows what men of British race can do under stress of trial and suffering. It illustrates the self-contained spirit of adventure in individuals which has done much towards the founding of the British Empire, and may yet help in extending the empire to all quarters of the globe."

Another writer, Andrew Wilson, whose testimony is cited, seems to have had a shade of doubt, though, like Major Pearse, he brushes it aside. In "The Abode of Snow," Wilson writes†—

* Life of Alexander Gardiner.

† Andrew Wilson's The Abode of Snow, page 399.

"If Colonel Gardiner, as I have no reason to believe, *confuses hearsay with his experiences*, it can scarcely be wondered at, considering his years, but there is *no doubt* as to the general facts of his career."

Now, to impugn the veracity of any person is an unpleasant task, and especially so when that person was believed by men of unquestioned probity and high position to have been a worthy soldier and a truthful traveller. It is a still more disagreeable, if not dangerous, task to attribute gullibility and credulousness to such persons, and in both cases only to be undertaken when one is certain of the real facts, has unimpeachable evidence to offer, no personal feeling, and a conviction that by exposing an imposture he is rendering a service to posterity.

The gentlemen whose testimony is adduced apparently accepted Gardiner's story, though it seems to us that occasionally a doubt appears to ruffle the fair surface of the tale, to be, however, smoothed away by an accusation of careless or unskilful inditing or editing on the part of those to whom Gardiner entrusted the earlier versions of his adventures and experiences. There seems to be a disinclination to probe too deep, and also an inclination to suppress certain testimony which would disprove the story. Had Major Pearse probed a little deeper the inherent probabilities of the story would have been revealed, and prevented him from writing what is an interesting romance disguised as an historical memoir.

Those who vouch for Gardiner may be divided into two classes. Firstly, the high-minded and unsuspicious gentleman who, having experienced strange things himself, can credit that others may have undergone even stranger, and, secondly, that not-uncommon class who, having wielded great power and absolute authority, and enjoyed the slavish deference which accompanies such in India, becomes so convinced of their own awfulness that they cannot suspect that any person of low degree would lie to, or deceive, them.

In justice one may add that a potent reason for believing Gardiner's version of his birth, upbringing and adventures was the apparent great age of the narrator, for few would believe that a man so near the grave would shamelessly lie.

Before analysing Gardiner's life, let us give a précis of that given by Pearse. According to this*—

Alexander Houghton Gardiner was the son of a Scotch doctor who, having graduated, emigrated to America with his own father just before the Revolutionary War. Both threw in their lot with the Americans, and the doctor became a personal friend of Washington and La Fayette, both of whom corresponded with him. Some of their letters descended to Gardiner who carried them about with him for years, but *unfortunately* the same fate that attended his diaries befell these most interesting documents.

After the war, Gardiner's father migrated to Mexico, where he set up in a town vaguely described as "on the banks of the Colorado," and there met with, and married, a lady, who was the daughter of an Englishman named Houghton, by a wife of Mexican-Spanish and Aztec-Indian extraction. Houghton had left his family to become an African traveller, and there being killed whilst exploring. Unfortunately, no record or mention of his travels exists in contemporary works.

Some time after his marriage, Dr. Gardiner quitted the mysterious town on the banks of the Colorado, and settled in another on "the shores of Lake Superior, just where the Mississippi runs out of it," and there assiduously raised a symmetrical family of three sons and three daughters. No wonder the family were rovers, for they were of singularly mixed extraction. In their veins ran the stormy mixture of English, Scottish, Spanish and Aztec blood, to which may be added suspicions of Italian, French, and Irish, for we find that the mother had French relations,

* Life of Alexander Gardiner, page 16.

that she spoke Italian fluently, and that there were also relations in Ireland, for Gardiner resided there some years after her death.

The religions of this well-balanced family were as symmetrical as their sexes, the sons being Unitarians and the daughters Catholics. In the year 1785, Alexander was born on the shores of the Mississippi, and five years later the father returned to the mysterious town on the banks of the Colorado, where he had entered the hymeneal state, which we now find was now called St. Xavier. This town has faded off the map, for though we have looked up Arrowsmith's atlases of the early 19th century, we find no trace of it; which is curious, for apparently it contained a Jesuit seminary of considerable importance.

Therein, though a Unitarian, Gardiner sat at the feet of the saintly fathers, and acquired a liberal education, learning, in addition, Italian and Spanish from his mother, and Latin and Greek from his father. This liberal education and linguistic acquirements must have been driven from his memory by the distressing experiences of after life, for we find little trace of them in his writings. He remained in college until he was 22, when his mother having died the *child* was withdrawn from the seminary.

Pearse records that Gardiner often sadly lamented, with tears in his eyes*, "the death of that dear old mother, to whose rare sweetness and strength of character I owe whatever is good in my own." The debt was not great! After her death, Gardiner says he was sent to Ireland, where he remained for five years, "studying for a maritime career," and it was to this residence in the Emerald Isle that he attributed the brogue which ornamented his speech.

Dr. Gardiner, who meanwhile had settled in Philadelphia and there acquired considerable property, died in

* Life of Alexander Gardiner, page 15.

1812, and the rest of the family, except the elder brother (then in Russia), having died out or disappeared, Gardiner returned to America to settle his father's affairs, as agent of the elder brother.

The middle seems to have dropped out of the symmetrical family, for henceforward we hear of none except the elder and younger brother, the elder being an engineer in the Russian service at Astrakhan. On his behalf Alexander realised the American estate, and then passing on to Madrid, sold up some "*chateaux en Espagne*," inherited from the polyglot mother.

Having remitted all but a small amount, retained for travelling expenses, Alexander departed for Astrakhan, *viâ* Cairo, Jerusalem, Jericho, etc., in company with a Jesuit named Aylmer. Whilst at Cairo they fell in with some French and Germans, one of who, named Rossaix, soon after entered the service of Ranjit Singh as an engineer, and this example sowed the seed which was to fructify seventeen years later. The party passed through Erzerum and Trebizond, meeting on the journey with some extraordinary adventures, during which Gardiner's companions apparently disappeared, for he reached Astrakhan alone.

Here he spent the next five years, learning mineralogy and engineering from his brother. This peaceful existence came to an end in 1817, when the brother being killed by a fall from his horse, the orphan (his own term) Gardiner was thrown into the cold world at the tender age of 32 or 33. The next year was spent in recovering from the cruel Russian Government, who had annexed the brother's estate, some £6,000*, and having appropriated this, Gardiner left ungrateful Russia to return to the "land of the free."

But, by one of those coincidences peculiar to Gardiner, two of the companions who had melted away in the journey

* Life of Alexander Gardiner, page 23.

from Jerusalem to Jericho, opportunely turned up, and persuaded him to accompany them through Persia, *en route* to Lahore. He did so, and eventually arrived at Herat, curiously enough again losing his companions on the way. From Herat he drifted through the Hazara country, accompanied by a faithful slave, of whose dog-like devotion he speaks feelingly. Contrary to the usual experiences he met with " boundless hospitality " from the Hazaras, with whom he stayed for a year, when apparently forgetting his intention of going on to Lahore, he returned to Astrakhan, freeing the faithful slave before doing so.

By another curious coincidence his return coincided with the arrival of a French uncle named De La Roche, with whose co-operation Gardiner succeeded in extracting another £12,000 from the Russian Government. The brother seems to have been well off for a working engineer who had died in debt to the Russian Government. The orphan remained at Astrakhan for another three years, when once more tired of Russia he disguised himself as an Uzbeg and set forth on that final journey which was to end " on the banks of the Indus." Incidentally, Srinagar is on the River Jhelum.

Crossing the Caspian and Aral Seas, and suffering shipwreck by the way, Gardiner eventually reached Khojend, accompanied by the faithful slave, who apparently drawn by that personal magnetism, so potent a factor in Gardiner's personality, had been telepathically guided to his old master. Meeting with a mysterious Polish renegade, who passed under the name of Aga Beg, Gardiner followed suit, assuming the name of Arb Shah. By some means they accumulated a band of kindred spirits, and set up in business as robber chiefs, in which they did quite well for a time.

Moving onwards, as the game became too dangerous, or the quarry too wary, the band ultimately reached the confines of Afghanistan, within which, as the principal occupation of the inhabitants was robbery and murder,

business was not an encouraging prospect. They therefore decided to seek service with Dost Mahomed, and rob under the ægis of a regular ruler. But before reaching Kabul, they met with Habibullah Khan, the *ex*-Amir then in arms to recover his throne*. This person was so struck with Gardiner's stern defiance of his superior force that he offered him a command, which was accepted.

Of this person, Gardiner speaks as chivalrous and high-minded a ruler, deprived of his kingdom by a wicked uncle, who not content even with that, had outraged the persons of Habibullah's mother and sisters, who, unable to bear the disgrace, had entreated the son and brother to kill them, a request complied with, probably with neatness and despatch. For two years Gardiner served this lovable person, and as usual adventures crowded upon him, raids, battles, caravan captures, etc., in plenty. One of the latter yielded the favourite wife of Dost Mahomed, one of whose "beauteous maidens" Habibullah bestowed upon Gardiner, together with a castello at Purwandarrah, as a wedding present.

Then followed two years' idyllic bliss, during which the lady presented Gardiner with a bonny boy. The wanderer's happiness was then broken by the storming of his fort, and death of his family whilst he was absent on a foray in the enemy's country. Returning victorious he found his castello burnt to the ground, the garrison, with the exception of the conventional sole survivor, all slain, and before the gate lay the body of the wife and son for the lady preferring "death to dishonour," had slain both herself and her son.

The biographer records that even in extreme old age Gardiner was always moved to tears by the recollection and recital of this incident†. As he was similarly affected in speaking of his mother, it seems fortunate that his matrimonial and maternal connections were not on the scale of

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* Life of Alexander Gardiner, page 57.

† Life of Alexander Gardiner, page 72.

those of John Holmes, who possessed two wives and three mothers, otherwise his lachrymal glands would have been unable to meet the strain.

Once more homeless, the orphan rejoined Habibullah, whom he found in extremity, for all being lost the high-minded prince had resolved to devote himself to a religious life. Before doing so, he, fearing the cruelty of a cold world, despatched his extensive harem and numerous family to, it is hoped, a better one.

Bidding each other a tearful farewell, they parted, Gardiner and the faithful slave (the Pole had unaccountably faded away), together with a few followers setting out to repair their fortunes. They needed it, for their capital was only forty pice, a sum which bears as suspicious a resemblance to Masson's wealth when on the journey from Peshawar to Kabul as the faithful slave does to Masson's Pathan companion. Far and wide they travelled, incident and adventure as usual crowding thick upon them.

In Kafiristan, which up till then no one had penetrated, Gardiner was offered a kingdom, which he carelessly declined, and then pursued his travels to the Oxus, the Hindu Kush, the Pamirs, Khorasan, Yarkand, Leh, Badakshan, Kunduz, Hunza, Gilgit, Srinagar, etc., all of which names fall as trippingly off his pen as melted butter from a spoon. As varied as the countries were the adventures and incidents. We have blue-eyed, golden-haired Kaffir ladies, Turkoman man stealers, dervishes, fakirs, mysterious demon haunted caves, stolen gods, amulets, Hindu and Mussulman travellers, wounds, starvation, attempted slavery, murder and fighting galore!

Presently, Gardiner, his band augmented by a number of Khyberee outlaws, arrived at Kandahar, where he was taken prisoner by Jubbar Khan, who held him to ransom for a lakh of rupees. However, Gardiner and the "forty thieves" managed to escape from Kandahar and reached Ghuznee, there to be again captured. The leader was

thrown into a dungeon, dark and drear, where for nine months he languished, what time the faithful Therbah and the altruistic Khyberees maintained him with food, etc., and importuned everyone in authority for his release. It is a pity that the tribe to which these extraordinary Khyberees belonged is not on record, for such devotion is so contrary to their usual characteristics as to deserve the fullest advertisement.

Ultimately Gardiner was released on condition of his proceeding to Herat, and thence to Europe, one which he immediately violated by taking the direction of Kabul, and incidentally robbing a caravan on the road. But, instead of taking shelter in the hills with their booty, this extraordinary band of robbers went on to Kabul, and laid the spoils, together with their swords, at the feet of Dost Mahomed.

The Amir gracefully accepted the booty, but declined the swords of "the men in buckram," who, doubtlessly repenting of their misplaced confidence, drifted into the Bajour country, and accepted service with Mir Alam Khan, who hired the band, swollen in some unexplained manner to 250 men, to Syad Ahmad Ghazi, then making his last stand against the Sikhs. Gardiner reached the Syad just in time to see him routed by Ventura, whereupon the adventurer retired, and sharing out the booty, dismissed his band. Where this booty came from is also unexplained.

Then, dismissing the dog-like Therbah, over whose departure he wept copiously, Gardiner travelled on to Peshawar, where he obtained service as an artillerist with Sultan Mahomed Khan, to whom in six months he taught the art and craft of artillery practice. Unfortunately he omits to mention where he himself acquired these accomplishments. His fame having reached Lahore, Ranjit Singh demanded this marvellous gunner, from whom Sultan Mahomed Khan parted sorrowfully, previously presenting him with a fine horse and a suitable retinue of servants. As usual, the journey to Lahore yielded its quota of adven-

ture, capped on arrival by a display of marvellous horsemanship, to the discomfiture of an insolent Sikh sirdar.*

Fortunately for both him and Ranjit Singh, his arrival coincided with that of two guns and a number of time-fuse shells, presented by the British, and which neither the French generals nor the European deserters from the Company's artillery had been able to manage successfully. Into the breach stepped Gardiner, who, finding in the tumbrils some printed instructions overlooked by these incompetent and singularly blind persons, utilised them so effectively that Ranjit Singh, enchanted with his magnificent skill, made him Colonel on the spot, principal instructor of the artillery, and gave him the right of demanding a fee of Rs. 500 to Rs. 5,000 from every officer or sirdar whom he instructed.

Here we may leave him for a space, whilst we compare Durand's and Pearse's memoirs with Gardiner's own version of his adventures, as appeared in the 22nd volume of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (1852). In forwarding the articles, of which there are three, Mr. Edgeworth, of the Civil Service, to whom Gardiner had sent them from Kashmir, expressly states that he has neither edited nor altered the letters. In these, Gardiner's father becomes merely a medical man in the Mexican service, and there is no mention of the mysterious towns on the banks of the Colorado, or the shores of Lake Superior.

The symmetrical family of singularly mixed descent is also absent from these pages, as are Gardiner's own educational accomplishments. The Jesuit College is transmigrated to the town of Clongoose in Ireland, the "chateaux en Espagne," do not materialise. Both father and brother die eleven years later, and Gardiner is at Philadelphia, to recover the American estate of the *deceased brother* in 1823, the very year in which, accord-

* Life of Alexander Gardiner, page 181.

ing to Pearse's memoir, he was at Herat. The romantic Polish robber chief does not appear, and the dog-like Therbah becomes just an ordinary servant.

The journeys into Kafiristan are still there, but we miss the beautiful golden-haired and blue-eyed Kaffir ladies. Still, perhaps as compensation, we have vast caverns, in which are concealed immense treasures, weird statues, jewels, amulets, mountain lakes in which soundings are unobtainable at 3,600 feet, and most wonderful of all, a detailed census of some 25 Kaffir tribes, comprising 740,000 people.

Yet another version was given by Durand,* according to whose "Story of a Soldier of the Olden Times" Alexander Houghton Campbell Gardiner, who was born of Scotch and Irish parents on the banks of Lake Superior, served five years in early life in the American Navy. In this version the mother loses her romantic descent, and becomes merely an Irishwoman of Country Mayo, and daughter of Major Houghton, a travelled who died in Africa. After his death, Gardiner was apparently withdrawn from the American Navy, and sent to Ireland to complete his education at Maynooth (a Jesuit seminary).

When about 25 years of age (1813) he went to Cairo, and from thence to Trebizond and Astrakhan, at which latter place he found employment with a relative in charge of a party of English and Scotch engineers working for the Russian Government. The relative (degree not stated) was killed by a fall from his horse, whereupon Gardiner left for Astrabad in company with a German named Dotterweiss, from whom he parted company soon after. From thence, in 1818, he went to Herat, and from there sent a messenger to Teheran to inquire as to the prospects of service with Ranjit Singh, and to obtain news of Allard, Ventura, Court and Avitabile, all of whom, he states, were then in service.

* Life of Sir Henry Durand, page 230.

Whilst awaiting the return of the messenger, he travelled into Hazara on the borders of which he met Dotterweiss, who, having been forcibly converted to Islam, with the usual painful operation, had had quite enough of Asia and travelling. Avoiding Herat, Gardiner returned with Dotterweiss to Astrakhan, and remainded there until 1819, when he set out for the Punjab. All we need remark at this juncture is that, as the first two of the Frenchmen did not arrive at Lahore until 1822, Gardiner must have badly mixed his dates.

The evidence we have adduced is quite sufficient to prove the unreliability of Gardiner's narratives, and to conclude, let us quote Sir Henry Yule's criticism of his travels, as set down in the preface to the second edition of Wood's Journey to the Oxus. We also supply the omissions made by Major Pearse, who by so doing has converted condemnation or disbelief in support.

| Major Pear's Quotation. | Yule's Notes in full.* |
|---|---|
| Omitted. See opposite. | I am sorry to have to include under apocryphal geography the extracts from the Diary of Colonel Gardiner, which appeared in the 22nd volume of the R. A. S. Journal for 1852. |
| Colonel Gardiner is not only a real person, but one who had acquaintance with the regions we are now treating of, Badakshan and the Pamirs, to a degree far surpassing that of any European or native traveller whose narrative has yet been published, but he also appears to have acquired the good esteem of Sir Henry Durand, whose opinion is of unusual worth. | Colonel Gardiner is not only a real person, but one who had acquaintance with the regions we are now treating of, Badakshan and the Pamirs, to a degree far surpassing that of any European or native traveller whose narrative has yet been published, but he also appears to have acquired the esteem of Sir Henry Durand, whose good opinion is of unusual worth. |
| Omitted. See opposite. | .... But I know not how to class the paper, for I have read it many times at intervals, but every trial has ended in mystification and disappointment. |

*Continuation of Yule's Note.*—" When we read the notices of incidental narratives of other travellers, how-

* Wood's Oxus, 2nd Edition, 1872, pages lvii and lviii.

ever far removed from us in date, we can generally trace their direction by known landmarks, and connect their new localities with old names: Marco Polo and John Wood, Hiuen Tsang and the Mirza, throw a flood of light upon each other, though separated by intervals of 600 and 1,200 years. But in trying to follow Colonel Gardiner, it is very different. Well known names now and then occur in the diary, such as Kunduz, Badakshan, Darah Darwaz, Gilgit and Yarkand, but amid the phantasmagoria of 'antres wild and deserts vast,' of weird scenery and uncouth names which flash past us in the diary, till our heads go round, we light upon these familiar names as if from the clouds, they link us to nothing before nor behind, and the traveller's tracks remind us of that uncanny creature which is said to haunt the eternal snows of the Sikkim Himalayas, and whose footsteps are found only at intervals of forty or fifty yards."

As regards the "high-minded Habibullah Khan," Ferrier's history shows that person to have been a sordid, bloody-minded, cowardly and drunken ruler, who having been abandoned by his followers was at last deposed by Purdil Khan, and the "vanquished chief, by way of consolation, plunged into every kind of debauch, and continued to reside at Kabul, where he still (1843) lives in a miserable plight, given up to excesses of the most filthy kinds.* "

It is very doubtful whether Gardiner even got as far as Kabul, and the pathetic story of the melancholy deaths of his wife and son may be dismissed as purely a figment of the imagination as are the characters he gives to Habibullah. Sir Henry Durand and the others, with the exception of Major Pearse, were misled by Gardiner, but as the latter wrote to the Punjab Government in 1894† asking for information concerning Gardiner, and had the reply returned that nothing whatever was traceable concerning that person, there is less excuse for his accepting Gardiner's wild tales.

* Ferrier's History of the Afghans, page 187.

† Punjab Records, File No. 150, Home and General, 1894.

The truth is that Gardiner took his incidents, adventures, and travels from the oral narratives of contemporary adventurers in Ranjit Singh's army, and from books of the period with which, as he survived for over thirty years after the publication of most, he must have been perfectly familiar, and has supplemented these by drawing on his imagination. All the claimed adventures will be found in books in our bibliography, and such as are not therein in the accounts concerning Lee, Rattray, Jan Sahib, Vieskenawitch, and other adventurers who at various times served Ranjit Singh.

We are of opinion that he was an Irishman, born in the town of Clongoose, and an ordinary deserter from the British service, Army or Navy.

It may be thought that we have devoted considerable space to exposing Gardiner's pretensions, but our reply is, that as from time to time he crops up as a person of considerable importance in Ranjit Singh's service, it is our duty to destroy this myth. Only a year ago we saw a portrait of Gardiner, and another romantic account of his experiences in the " Sphere, " and it may be that others, unseen by us, have also appeared, or may again appear. Let us then, now, relate Gardiner's *authentic* career, commencing with the day on which he presented himself at Lahore. The news-writer records*—

" *15th December, 1831.*—Messrs. Khora (*sic*) and Gardiner, two Europeans about 35 years of age, light hair and complexion, presented themselves with a nuzzur of five rupees each, and were at once admitted to an audience. The Maharajah asked from what quarter they came, and with what object. They answered that they were formerly serving in a ship of war, but not being satisfied with their position, quitted it, and proceeded from Bombay to Peshawar, where Sultan Mahomed Khan had entertained them on Rs. 3 per day. They were with him six months, but having heard of the liberality of His Highness, they had applied for their discharge and come to Lahore.

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* Punjab Records, Book No. 137, letter No. 44.

"The Maharajah inquired what baggage they had with them. They said, a riding horse each, and five or six servants. His Highness asked them if they were acquainted with the exercises of artillery. They answered that they were. An allowance of Rs. 2 per day (temporary) has been fixed upon each of them, and they have been directed to join the division of artillery commanded by Sultan Mahomed (at Lahore). They say that they are Americans, and that there were originally three of them; but I hear that one died at Peshawar."

Gardiner's companion may be identified with Kanara, whose name appears in some of the rolls of Europeans as Kerry or Kennedy, both names easily corrupted into Kanara. We think the story of the third man's death is incorrect, and are inclined to identify him with Ramsay, another Irishman to be mentioned later.

Here then are solid and unimpeachable facts! Before this prosaic and faded old entry of 97 years ago, which has probably lain almost unnoticed since the day it was written, vanishes like the Genii's palace, that beautiful edifice built upon Gardiner's romantic story, peopled by the creatures of his imagination, and buttressed by the testimony of so many credulous and simple-minded gentlemen. Vanish the highly accomplished parents of such singularly mixed breed and curious antecedents, and the long and tangled line of an adventurous life, "one end commencing on the shores of Lake Superior and the other ending on the banks of the Indus."

Gone are the many years of schooling in the Jesuit college, the long years of stirring travel, the high-minded Habibullah Khan, those beautiful blue-eyed, golden-haired, Kaffir ladies, and the maiden captive, who became Gardiner's wife, and whose sad fate "always brought tears to his eyes." Like his hearers, we also could weep over the fate of that beautiful figment of his imagination, especially when we remember that her prototype was just a discarded mistress of Gulab Singh's. With them disappear "the faithful Therbah," the mysterious robber

chief, the devoted Khyberees, the companionship with princes, the commands of armies, and that adventurous travel and stirring adventure in lands " where no European had ever set foot."

Worst of all*, " the man of magnetic influence, who by virtue of his personality " could bind savages to him, " the man whom England might be proud to claim, the splendid example to the young men of the present day, one of the finest specimens ever known of the soldier of fortune, etc.," turns out to be an ordinary deserter from the English navy, or Company's army, previously serving in a very minor capacity with a Barakzai sirdar, one who never saw a fraction of the adventures and places he romances about, whose career with both Gulab Singh and the Khalsa was obscure and sordid, who has many discreditable deeds against him, and who was eventually deported by Henry Lawrence for an outrage the lowest of Indians had declined to perpetrate.

The agreement of dates is exact. According to Gardiner's own statement, he arrived at Lahore in 1831 from Peshawar, and the only difference is that he does not mention his companion. The division or *derah* of Sultan Mahomed Khan appears in the pay-rolls of 1831-32 as No. 2 of the Topkhana Jinsi (heavy artillery), its permanent station being Lahore. As with so many others, Gardiner's name did not appear in the Khalsa pay-rolls, as he was paid by Dhian Singh, to whose separate troops he was transferred shortly after arrival. He successively served Gulab Singh and Hira Singh, and after the death of the latter, the guns he commanded were transferred to the permanent establishment, and for the first and only time Gardiner's name appears in the pay-rolls of November 1845 as commanding No. 22 horse battery.

The records give nothing concerning him after the first mention, until many years later, but we find certain

* Life of Sir Henry Durand, Volume II, page 237.

mentions in contemporary books, Baron Hugel writes under date June 1836—

* "The Jamadar's son wishes to learn English, and has applied with that view to a man calling himself an American, really an Irishman, and not of that class called gentlemen, to judge by appearances. He is an officer in the Maharajah's artillery.........The American-Irishman came late in the evening and brought me a plan of Kandahar. I thanked him for the attention, but observed that I could not make use of any plans, but what I myself had taken."

Herbert Edwardes adds more details, and another of Gardiner's versions of his earlier career†—

"*February, 1842.*—In the camp of Gulab Singh was an adventurer who described himself as an American, who had been a lieutenant in the navy, yet had somehow or other been educated in a Jesuit College, although he had left school at the age of 12! As Lawrence remarked, his education had been finished off by Gulab Singh, under whom he had the command of six guns. He had married a native wife from Gulab Singh's own household, and had wild moods of talking, letting the corner of dark things peep out, and then stopping with a look behind him as if life at Jammu were both strange and fearful." It was.

Writing in 1842, Lawrence mentions that he had been supplied with information by a Mr. Gardiner‡, "an adventurer serving in command of six guns with Gulab Singh's artillery at Peshawar, the letter containing which had, at the writer's request, been destroyed." The reasons are obvious, for what Gardiner's fate would have been had Gulab Singh obtained evidence of correspondence with the English, is best left unimagined.

He admits, and without compunction, being concerned in some of the discreditable outrages and assassinations connected with the anarchy, and we quite believe the following, for he was later concerned in worse. The

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* Hugel's Travels in Kashmir, etc., pages 318—22.

† Life of Henry Lawrence, Volume I, page 230.

‡ Punjab Records, Book No. 41, letter No. 65.

events leading up to what is now described will be found in the appendix on the Punjab Anarchy* :—

"By the 8th October things had reached such a pitch that the murder of the whole Dogra family was decided upon, and Chait Singh was rash enough to say in Durbar to Dhian Singh : 'See what will become of you in twenty-four hours.' Dhian Singh, who was a man of an inflexible resolution and imperturable serenity of demeanour smiled politely and said : 'Very well, sir, we shall *see.*' ..............Dhian Singh gave instructions to the army, which was completely at his orders, to remain perfectly quiet all night. I received orders that the loaded guns were to be placed at nightfall at all the gates of the palace, and that whatever occurred, whatever thunders there were at the gates, everyone was to feign sleep. Raja Dhian Singh asked me if I would like to accompany him, and *of course* I said : 'Yes.'

"The party consisted of about fifteen.........the ladies of the zenana had promised to give us free entrance to the building in which the Maharajah and his minister slept. It was near midnight when we entered the palace, and no sooner had we left the gate through which we had been admitted, than a voice accosted us : 'Who is it ?' Dhian Singh replied : 'The Maharajah goes to bathe to-morrow at Amritsar, and we are to make the necessary arrangements.' This was the concerted reply. We reached another and inner gate which opened noiselessly, on a whispered order from Dhian Singh. Without uttering a sound we stealthily crept our way in the dark up a flight of stairs, up a place called the Badshahi Takht, and thence up to the immediate vicinity of the royal apartment. Here Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh held a whispered conversation, the purport of which I could not catch. At this moment a man started up at seeing us, and tried to run off. Suchet Singh shot him dead, and was almost instantly knocked down by a tremendous cuff on the ear by Gulab Singh, who cursed him under his breath for his imprudence.

"On looking over the parapet we saw two companies of the Maharajah's bodyguard. Dhian Singh quickly went down the staircase to the place where they were stationed

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* Life of Alexander Gardiner, pages 215 and 221.

and was accosted by the subedar in command, who said: 'Why did you fire?' I had followed Dhian Singh and stood immediately behind him. He simply showed his right hand, upon which he had two thumbs, and put his finger to his lips. On seeing this well known peculiarity, the subedar whispered: 'Lie down,' and the whole of the two companies lay down and pretended sleep. The subedar then pointed to the door of the doomed man, which had been left ajar, with a mute gesture. Dhian Singh entered, followed by the whole crowd. Lo! There on the bed sat Maharajah Kharak Singh, washing his teeth. The adjoining bed, which belonged to Chet Singh, was empty. When asked where his minister was, Kharak Singh simply replied that he had gone out on hearing a shot fired.

"Perceiving a fierce sort of half smile on the faces of the Dogra brothers, he begged that Chet Singh's life might be spared, and would have proved very restive, if his own son and four or five Sikhs had not held him down, whilst we proceeded in search of the fugitive. Then two torches were lit and on entering the room in which we expected to find the minister, it appeared to be empty; it was very long and narrow. Lal Singh, however, called out that he saw the glitter of a sword in one corner, and there cowered the wretched man, his hand upon his sword. We were armed with daggers.

"The eyes of Dhian Singh seemed to shoot fire at us as his gaze alighted and fixed itself on his deadly foe. Gulab Singh was for interposing to do the deed himself, fearing for his brother, who was a short man, in the desperate defence he counted upon; but Dhian Singh shook him off roughly, and dagger in hand, slowly advancing towards his enemy, said: 'The twenty-four hours you were courteous enough to mention to me have not yet elapsed,' Then, with the spring of a tiger, the successful counter-plotter dashed at his enemy and plunged his dagger into his heart, saying: 'Take this in memory of Ranjit Singh.' Dhian Singh then turned round to his party, his face radiant with triumph, and courteously thanked us for our aid."

Comment on the mentality of a European who so calmly confesses having been concerned in such an atrocious deed is, we imagine, superfluous.

Gardiner claims to have been present at most of the murders and atrocities connected with the Anarchy, and we imagine with a fair amount of truth. According to his account, he was prominent in the defence of the Hazuri Gate of Fort Lahore during the siege of January, 1841, and here follows his version* :—

" I sidled down from the archway to look through the chink of the Hazuri Bagh Gate, which I had blocked up with carts, and saw 14 guns brought up, planted within 20 yards, and aimed straight at the gate. The Dogras on the walls began to look over and were jeered by Sher Singh's troops. Gulab Singh made contemptuous replies, and roared down to Sher Singh, demanding that he should surrender. There was a brief, but breathless space, and I had not time to warm my artillerymen, when down came the gate over our party, torn to pieces by the simultaneous discharge of all the fourteen guns. Seventeen of my party were blown to bits, parts of the bodies flying over me.

" When I had wiped the blood and brains from my face, and could recover a minute, I saw only one trembling khalasi. I hurriedly asked him for a portfire, having lost mine in the fall of the ruins. He had just handed it to me, when with a wild yell 300 Akalis swept up the Hazuri Bagh and crowded into the gateway. They were packed as close as fish, and could hardly move over the rubbish with which the gate was blocked. Just as the crowd was rushing upon me with swords high in the air, I managed to fire the ten guns, and blew them into the air.........In the pause which ensued I loaded the guns with the aid of my three artillerymen who had survived the discharge, and swept away the hostile artillerymen outside the gate."

Gardiner undoubtedly conducted the defence of the gate, for Reynell Taylor, writing in 1847, remarks that Gulab Singh desired to have Gardiner returned to him, mentioning that† " Gulab Singh has a high opinion of Gardiner. He says that Gardiner defended the Hazuri Bagh Gate and wanted to blow up the Badshahi Mosque with red hot shot, but Gulab Singh dissuaded him, as the

* Life of Alexander Gardiner, pages 234-35.

† Political Diaries, Volume VI, page 52.

passages leading to the fort from the mosque were full of powder, and would have blown up both besiegers and besieged."

But, the official report of this episode, which is, we believe, the correct one, gives a different, and more probable version :

*" *20th January, 1841.*—The besiegers suffered heavily on the first day by a stratagem of the defenders of the Akbari Gate. They brought up guns into the Hazuri Bagh, and commenced to fire at the doors, with the intention of battering them down. They had hardly fired a few rounds when the gate was opened, and believing this to be a sign of surrender, the Akalis and the soldiers swarmed in, and were met with a heavy fire of grape shot from the guns at the gate. Over 300 men were killed in the attack, which then ceased. The garrison then reclosed and secured the gate."

After the evacuation of Fort Lahore, Gardiner accompanied Gulab Singh in an expedition into Kashmir, to quell the mutiny of the Sikh garrison, who not having received the increase of pay given to the troops who had participated in gaining the throne for Sher Singh, and believing the Governor of Kashmir responsible, mutinied and burnt him alive. But, as this person had murdered not only his own mother, but his eldest son, we can feel but little sympathy for him. However, Gulab Singh's methods with the mutineers were summary, for after subduing them, he annihilated the two battalions.

After this, Gulab Singh, in compliance with orders from the durbar, proceeded to Peshawar to assist the British troops under the conditions of the tri-partite treaty, but being by nature a trimmer, deliberately delayed his march in order that matters should take a definite course before he arrived, and it was on this occasion that Lawrence made use of Gardiner. After the conclusion of this campaign, Gardiner's battery, with two battalions of Dogras, were made over to Dhian Singh, then Wazir at

* Punjab Records, Book No. 15, letter No. 18.

Lahore, who urgently needed troops he could depend upon, for the Sikhs cordially detested the Dogra brothers one and all, and with these Gardiner took part in the second storming of the fort, and the subsequent slaughter.

He claims to have been the man who placed the head of Dhian Singh's murderer at the feet of the widow awaiting it on the funeral pyre, and, judging from his record, with truth. In December 1842 he commanded this force sent on an expedition to Sialkot to compel the evacuation of the fort by Kashmir and Peshora Singh, and though losing 200 men in the attack, was successful.

In October 1844, all the Europeans were dismissed by Pundit Julla, and Gardiner, fearing the revenge of the relatives of the men shot down in the attack on the Hazuri Bagh Gate, took shelter with the Akalis, and, he says, became one of them. As such, he was, he claims, entrusted with the honour of carrying the head of the Pundit through the bazaars of Lahore, before it was thrown to the dogs.

But all the atrocities in which he claims to have been concerned pale before that of which there is absolute proof. The person concerned was Jodha Ram, who had succeeded to the command of Avitabile's brigade, and in this capacity had struck and abused Jawahir Singh, when visiting his camp. The whirligig of time having thrown Jawahir Singh into supreme power, he used it thus :—

*" Jodha Ram was seized, and being brought into the Wazir's presence, was reviled and subjected to indignities, and sentenced to lose his right thumb, nose and ears. Being a Brahmin, no Hindu of any grade would undertake the execution of the sentence, nor would the Kotwal of Lahore, a Mussulman. He too refused; and we blush to record that the only man in Lahore who could be found to execute the barbarous decree was a European. Mr. Gardiner, or Gordona, in the Sikh artillery, took a razor, and with his own hands in cold blood, without personal enmity of any sort, inflicted the punishment which Sikhs,

* Calcutta Review, 1847, page 249.

Hindus, and Mussulmans had shrunk from with disgust. But then he was made a Colonel; and as Walpole observed: 'Every man has his price. The only thing is to find it out!'"

Naturally enough, Gardiner does not mention this incident which was the true reason of his being ultimately deported from Lahore, but alleges that it was due to the intrigues of Teja Singh. Of this hereafter.

Gardiner remained in favour with Jowahir Singh, whose own popularity continued to wane, though he hung on precariously until September 1845, when matters came to a climax, and he followed his predecessors in the Wazirat by the same violent means. He still held the fort, but with troops quite unreliable, some of which were under the command of Gardiner. The Punjab Records give us the concluding scene of Jowahir Singh's career, and as Gardiner is herein mentioned, and his mutilation of Jodha Ram confirmed, we give the following extract:—

*" *23rd February, 1845.*—Sirdar Jowahir Singh shows mistrust of everyone, and is quite unable to act for himself. In one case he has done so, and this in ordering the mutilation of a Brahmin officer who had offended him. The troops on guard at the palace immediately left, and those at Jammu have declared their intention to avenge the outrage. The sirdar has lately employed several persons, one of whom is a Mr. Gardiner, a deserter from some European regiment, to raise three regiments, and those amount to about 900 men. There are also 2,000 hillmen and artillery, formerly in Hira Singh's service, all encamped near the fort, and liberally supplied with arms and ammunition. But they can do nothing for his protection against the army.

" At Lahore† Sirdar Jowahir Singh has for some days prepared to defend the fort, and told his new levies they were his only hope, at the same time giving each man a present. The instrument of this man is the European Gardiner, now created a Colonel, mentioned in an earlier

* Punjab Records, Book No. 165, letter No. 1.
† Punjab Records, File No. 165-66, 1845.

letter. I learn to-day that this man is believed in the Punjab to be a deserter from a man-o'-war in Bombay. I also find that a report that I did not mention before is authentic. It is that with his own hands he cut off the fingers, nose, and ears of Jodha Ram, lately mutilated by order of the sirdar.

"On the 22nd the Rani gave Dina Nath jewels to the amount of Rs. 10,000 to advise her as to means of flight. The result was that she was advised not to rely on Gardiner's levies, but to go with the sirdar and bring the young Maharajah into the camp of the brigade lately belonging to Ventura. They departed towards Shalimar, but the troops immediately sent parties to watch the roads leading everywhere but back to the city, for the panches had decided to put the sirdar to death, and cut off the Maharani's nose as a woman of loose morals. Both returned to the fort."

After the 1st Sikh War Gardiner returned to the service of Gulab Singh, having escaped active participation in the campaign, during which he alleges that he was employed as commander of the bodyguard of Rani Jindan, the regent, and was *de facto* Governor of Lahore. The latter statement is certainly incorrect, for we find no mention of it in the Records, in which such an important event would have been noted, and probably the former is as untrue.

With the taking over of the administration by the British complaints as to former outrages and abuses were vociferous, and that concerning Gardiner and Jodha Ram and the former's punishment is supplied by the following quotations :—

*" *February 13th, 1846.*—Pundit Jodha Ram came before me (Henry Lawrence) and complained that Mr. Gardiner had cut off his nose, ears, and right thumb with a razor, by order of Jowahir Singh. He is awarded Rs. 500 and his forfeited jaghirs restored."

†" *17th February, 1846.*—The European Gardiner, who obtained the rank of Colonel for mutilating Jodha

* Political Diaries, Volume II, page 29.
† Political Diaries, Volume II, page 92.

Ram by order of the late Jowahir Singh is dismissed from the Khalsa service, his jaghir being forfeited and himself ordered to leave Lahore."

Having been deported to Ludhiana, Gardiner remained there for some time, during which he was employed by Major Carmichael Smyth, then engaged on his History of the Reigning Family of Lahore, to furnish the ground work of most of the accounts of the Punjab, from 1841 downwards, and though Gardiner's veracity is usually suspect, his statements in this are corroborated by Lawrence, Cunningham, and McGregor. Smyth, like so many others, seems to have been impressed by Gardiner, for he remarks*—

"My information has been derived from Mr. Gardiner, an officer of the Sikh artillery, one of the few who have not grown rich in that service. For the last thirteen years, he has, I believe, held the rank of Colonel, but as his pay has been much reduced of late, and he has now only charge of six guns, I have merely given him the rank of Captain. He long foresaw in the political hemisphere of Lahore the storm that has taken place, and after the death of Hira Singh, when Colonel Cortlandt was anxious to return, and Col. Mouton actually did return to the Sikh service, Colonel Gardiner was most anxious to leave it, and Major Lawrence kindly endeavoured to procure him an appointment, but he did not succeed."

What became of Gardiner during the next few years we are unable to ascertain, and our next trace of him is at Multan, where he had apparently set up in business, and had even been allowed to purchase a number of unserviceable cannon balls from the munitions captured by the British during the last Sikh War. The letter we now quote puts another nail in the coffin of the mysterious birthplace on the " shores of Lake Superior ", for having been called upon to declare his nationality, none but British subjects being then allowed to trade in India, Gardiner sent in the following letter :—

* Reigning Family of Lahore, page XV.

"*Multan, 5th October, 1850.*—I most respectfully beg to state that being a native of Philadelphia, the capital of Pennsylvania, in the U. S. of America, I must consequently consider myself an American citizen. I have paid out large sums of money in erecting saltpetre works, and purpose leaving here in 30 days to establish myself permanently at Bombay.

(Sd.) A. GARDINER,
Indus Commercial Establishment."

We do not know the exact date when Gardiner re-entered Gulab Singh's service, but it was probably in 1851, nor do we know his exact position in the Kashmir army. According to his own account, as stated by Pearse, he was in command of the Kashmir artillery and a battalion of infantry, receiving a salary of some Rs. 500 per month, as well as the income of several jaghirs. It is said that he assisted Gulab Singh in the subjugation of Kashmir, and that these emoluments were a reward for his services.

A copy of the entry in the burial register of Sialkot concerning Gardiner has been very kindly supplied to us by Father Baldwin, the Roman Catholic Chaplain of that station. According to this, Alexander Gardiner, a Colonel in the Kashmir army, died at Jammu on the 22nd of January 1877, and was buried in Sialkot cemetery three days later.

The age, at first entered at 98, has been scratched out and that of 76, which was his actual one, entered, and initialled.

As a copy of this certificate must have been supplied to Major Pearse, it is curious that he did not notice the correction, which is of equal age, and in the same writing as the first entry. Had he done so the dates and age would have proved the falsity of Gardiner's Rougemontic narrative.

## CHAPTER XIV

**HAMISH MCGREGOR MCPHERSON — FRANCIS JOHN KANARA — RAMSAY — VIESKENAWITCH — HENRY CHARLES VAN CORTLANDT — LESLIE OR RATTRAY — ROBERT DICK — DOTTENWEISS OR DOTTERWICH — STEPHEN LANE — FRANCIS.**

### *Hamish McGregor McPherson.*

The nationality of this person with the exceedingly Scotch name is yet indeterminate. The Punjab Records, under date 18th October 1828, mention that an East Indian named McPherson had sought service with Ranjit Singh, but failing to obtain it had gone on to Bahawalpur.

We were informed many years ago that McPherson had been an officer in some Scottish regiment, from which he had been either cashiered or reduced, a statement which is probably correct, for von Orlich, who mentions him as Commander of the Bahawalpur Infantry, remarks that McPherson was a fugitive who had "sought refuge there *." His being mistaken for a Eurasian is excusable, for a person long wandering will be deeply sun-tanned. However, as the inscription on his grave at Ahmedpore describes him as " of Scotland," we may assume that McPherson was a native of that country.

Herbert Edwardes, who tolerated no euphemisms, mentions McPherson as a European†, so that we may assume him to have been such. Bahawalpur being one of the principal entries to the Punjab, was frequently visited by European travellers, and officers, some of whom mention the Bahawalpur troops, though differing greatly in their estimation of them. For instance, Burnes and Wood record that in 1836 the Bahawalpur troops under McPherson comprised some 1,300 men, " tolerably well

* Travels in India, Volume I, page 146.
† Herbert Edwardes: A Year on the Punjab Frontier, Volume II, page 385.

equipped, and having a band and colours.'' What the band must have been like is easier to imagine than to have had to listen to!

Havelock, who passed through in 1839-1840, remarked that the Daudputra Regiments trained by McPherson were just about as good as the Sikhs, in which opinion he differs from Dr. Atkinson, who saw them a year later, and records that* :—

"The Bahawalpur troops consist of three regiments of about 3,000 men. The first, numbering 1,000 is commanded by a European named McPherson, who gets Rs. 5 per day. The specimen of the Khan's soldiers we saw was a poor one. He was on guard, black belted and musketed. Such a musket! The brass plate of the cross belt had upon it the number 24, surrounded by an oval wreath, the plate being two inches wider than the leather. It (the plate) had been copied from one brought to the Khan by a deserter from the 24th Native Infantry, and the numbers were evidently considered part of the design. The soldier's habiliments, except a nondescript cap, were those worn by a palki bearer in India, and his hut did duty as a sentry box.''

Apparently this was one of the battalions other than that of McPherson, for Lieut. Trevelyan writes of the latter that† :—

"The sepoys were dressed in white uniform with black belts, and quite well disciplined. They had a band of drums and fifes, to which they marched in very good time. A Mr. McPherson, who has been some years at the Court, is employed to discipline the regulars. The remainder wore a coloured uniform, and were armed with matchlocks.''

Whether disciplined or not, the Daudputra contingent acquitted themselves quite well at Multan, where they served with Herbert Edwardes and the Khalsa contingent under van Cortlandt. The description given by Edwardes, of their leader, is worth quoting‡ :—

* Expedition to Afghanistan, Volume I, page 74.
† Calcutta Journal, 1835, page 395.
‡ A Year on the Punjab Frontier, Volume II, page 385.

"*Kaneri, June 18th, 1848.*—I heard that the Daudputra army was in a state of mutiny and galloping up, arrived amongst a lot of wild looking warriors, with red beards and hair. Suddenly a European stepped out of the crowd, and advanced to me in a hurried manner, wiping his forehead, and exclaiming: 'Oh! sir, our army is disorganised.' A pleasing salutation to meet one with, on arriving at the field of battle. He then told me that his name was McPherson, that he commanded one of the two regular regiments belonging to the Nawab. I asked him where his General was. He laughed and pointed to a large peepul tree, round which a number of men were gathered.

"I galloped up, and looking over the shoulders of the people, saw a little old man in dirty clothes, and with nothing but a skull cap on his head, sitting under a tree with a rosary in his hand, the beads of which he was rapidly telling, and muttering in a peevishly helpless manner: 'God be praised! God be praised! etc.' apparently quite abstracted from the scene, and utterly unconscious of the fact that six pounder cannon balls were gonig through the branches, and that officers were imploring him for orders, and that eight or nine thousand rebels were waiting to destroy the army of which he was the Chief General. He had to be shaken by his people before he could comprehend that I had arrived, and as he rose and tottered forward, looking vacantly forward into my face, I saw that I might as well talk to a post, so took charge personally."

Under Edwardes' command, the Bahawalpur contingent acquitted themselves quite well, assisting to capture the enemy's stores, ammunition, and eight guns as well as inflicting heavy loss upon them, their own casualties numbering 100 of the 250 in the combined Khalsa contingent and Bahawalpur force.

The next battle was that of Saddusam, on the 1st July, 1848, under the command of McPherson, where they took the right of the line, and in storming the village of Saddusam, he was killed. His tomb at the village of Ahmedpore is said to have been erected by his Mussulman

wife, Begum Murad Bukhsh, who lies beside him, and it bears the following inscription :—

> Hamish McGregor McPherson of Scotland, killed in battle at the head of his regiment, while fighting against the Dewan Mool Raj, at Siddhoosam, near Multan, on the 1st July, 1848.

*Francis John Kanara.*

It was remarked of Charles I that nothing in his life became him so well as the manner of his leaving it, a remark which may fittingly apply to Kanara.

As with the greater number of the adventurers, he moved on to the stage unobtrusively, and dwelt for a long time amongst the crowd of supers before stepping forward to play his brief part, and die a hero's death. When and whence he came is not definitely traced, but circumstantial evidence and deductions render it fairly certain that he was an Irishman, a deserter from the British forces, and the person who accompanied Gardiner when he came to Lahore.

The lists of Europeans in the service of the Khalsa do not include Kanara, but they do a person sometimes called Kenny, and at other times Kennedy, who came to Lahore in the same year as Gardiner. The name is also given as Khora, the various corruptions being due to mispronunciations, or perhaps intentional misspelling. James Abbott, under whom Kanara served in 1848, remarks that* " strange suspicions of influence from the valley of roses (Gulab Singh in Kashmir) haunt the Colonel's mind, acquired probably from his perusal of Major Smyth's volume, the information in which was gleaned from Colonel Gardiner, his friend and *countryman.*"

This seems to show that Kanara was an Irishman, and as he is very probably the same person mentioned by Lieutenant Maclagan, the fact seems proved. Lieut.

* Political Diaries, Volume IV, page 150.

Maclagan, whose diary has not yet been published, writes :—

" *12th April, 1846.*—Met Colonel Kinaila of the Sikh service, and had a long talk with him. He says that he has been three years in the Egyptian service, and 18 in that of the Sikhs. He speaks with a strong Irish accent. His parents had migrated to America in 1797, and he was born in Northumberland Town, Philadelphia, St. John's street, odd side, in 1799. He greatly bewails the deteriorations of the Sikh service, and says it is not worth remaining in. He does not seem a very superior sort of man."

It is curious to note that Baron Hugel, when speaking of Gardiner, makes use of exactly the same concluding sentence, and that both men claimed to have been Americans from Philadelphia! In some accounts, Kanara has been described as a Viennese American of noble extraction, and heir to a great fortune, for some time this complex nationality rather puzzled us, until suspecting the influence of Gardiner, we looked through the numerous papers relating to Kanara, and found our suspicions were verified, for the document containing this statement mentions the information was derived from Colonel Gardiner " a life long friend of our father's."

Not content with endowing his friend and countryman with a mythical ancestry, Gardiner also bestowed upon him a coat of arms, thus described by Kanara's eldest son :—

" Our escutcheon is composed of two military flags crossed with supporters, two daggers having crowing game cocks *poised on their points*, and a crest of a large game cock crowing between the crossed flags. There was a motto, but it is now illegible. Our father was born in Vienna, and has relations in Vienna and London and America, where he is heir to a large estate."

Amongst the vernacular papers in the Punjab Records is a summary of Kanara's career in the Khalsa service, which was compiled in support of his family's claim to a pension, and according to this, he successively

served with Tej Singh, Gulab Singh, Hira Singh, and Dhian Singh, before being posted to the main line of the Khalsa army, on the death of Hira Singh. His name first appears in the Khalsa Records of 1842, as commander of a battery under General Mehtab Singh, and drawing a salary of Rs. 215 per month, later increased to Rs. 350. The petition sent in by the family details much other war service which, however, we need not enumerate.

Like Gardiner and the others, he was dismissed by Pundit Julla, and re-engaged by Jowahir Singh on an increased salary. His battery forming part of the forces usually stationed at Hazara, escaped participation in the first Sikh War, and after its conclusion. Kanara, together with Holmes and van Cortlandt, was permitted to remain in service, their forces being employed as escorts to the British officers detailed to survey, and settle the Punjab, and disband the troops superfluous to the treaty.

Kanara's battery was attached to the force accompanying Captain Abbott in Hazara, and under this officer's political control, he remained until his murder. The positions of the Europeans in the Punjab, both in the British and Khalsa service, were difficult, not to say, very precarious, for the struggle just concluded had by no means been unequal, and having been accompanied by dubious proceedings on the part of the Sikh leaders, had led the soldiery to believe that they had not been fairly beaten, and to cherish an ever growing hope that a second attempt might reverse the conditions.

This bitterness, and smouldering discontent was further accentuated by the drastic reductions in pay and numbers, perhaps rightly insisted upon by the British, for the revenues of the country were quite unable to support the incubus of a huge army. The numerous dismissals were especially odious to men who had hitherto considered the military life to be the most honourable of all, and themselves to be the rulers of the nation, and arbiters of

its destiny. The numerous privileges, high pay, and rich rewards, resultant upon the anarchy, and frequent changes of rule hitherto prevailing, were all swept away, and the army reduced to a shadow of its former numbers and importance.

As soon as the news of the murders of Anderson and Vans Agnew at Multan filtered into Hazara, the troops broke out into overt acts of mutiny, and Kanara's position between loyalty to the orders of the durbar, as interpreted by Captain Abbott, and obedience to those of Chattar Singh, under whom the troops actually were, placed him in a very difficult position. As he took a very firm hand with his men, and rigorously suppressed the mutinies or attempts at them, he soon became most unpopular.

By threats, promises of promotion, and monetary reward, every possible endeavour was made to bring him over to Chattar Singh's views. But without effect; for Kanara was incorruptible, and firmly declined to permit his guns to be removed without direct orders from Captain Abbott, whom he regarded as the authorised representative of the durbar of Lahore. Naturally, such resistance enraged Chattar Singh and Kanara's own soldiers, so the end came on the 6th August, 1848. Captain Abbott's official report narrates that :—

*" *8th August, 1848.*—Hazara. This morning on my return from my walk, I received a note from Colonel Kanara, saying that the Sirdar had ordered him to move his guns, and encamp outside the city; that he had remonstrated, saying that such a move at such a time would subject them to the charge of rebellion, it being without my sanction. That the Sirdar had sent his confidential servant to win him over, but without avail ; that he thought there would be a struggle for his guns that night, and begged my instructions how to act. If he was to resist, he begged support. I had hardly read his note before his murder was announced to me.

* Political Diaries, Volume IV, pages 224-25.

"The Sirdar had, it seems, sent two companies to seize the guns by force. Colonel Kanara loaded them with grape, and ordered his golandauz (gunners) to fire. They shrank from him, saying that they were servants of the Sirdar. His havildar still refusing to apply the match, Kanara cut him down and applied it with his own hand. It burnt priming (missed fire) and he was immediately shot down by two sepoys. It is said that he rose to cut down another assailant, when his neck was severed. Thus died a man, who whatever the defect of education and infirmities of nature, closed his career with an act of gallantry and loyalty unsurpassed by anything I have ever read in history. I sincerely trust that the family of this brave and loyal man will be provided for. They live in Lahore, and I earnestly trust that measures of retribution upon the brutal and wanton murderers will be speedily adopted."

Abbott erected a monument at his own expense at Haripur, near Abbottabad, which consists of a roughly built stone obelisk, bearing a small marble tablet, with the following inscription :—

> "To the memory of Colonel Kanara, who fell nobly in the performance of his duty, being summoned by the rebel Sikh army to surrender his guns, and being basely deserted by his men, he seized a linstock and fell singly combating a host, July 6th, 1848."

After many pressing appeals by Abbott, on behalf of Kanara's family, the Government, much against the will of Sir Frederick Currie, the Resident, who remarked that Kanara's fate served him perfectly right, as he was really under the orders of Chattar Singh, granted a small pension of Rs. 10 per head to the wife and family of the murdered man. One of his sons, born a few months before his death, even now survives in Lahore.

*Ramsay.*

We may safely assume this man to be the third of those mentioned in the account of Gardiner's arrival at

Lahore, as having deserted with him and *Khora* (Kanara) from Bombay. Certainly the report of the arrival of the two latter mentions that one had died at Peshawar, but this we believe to be incorrect, and that Ramsay had remained on at Peshawar after the others left, and later gone on into Central Asia, with the kafila, which the three accompanied either from Bombay or Karachi. If these men were actually naval deserters it is most probably from Karachi that they deserted, for they would scarcely have avoided detection or even notice during the long tramp up from Bombay.

The report of Ramsay's death may have been a friendly action on the part of the others, to prevent any search for him, should they themselves have been made over to the British. What happened to Ramsay between 1830 and 1848 we may only conjecture, but his wanderings may have been very wide and his adventures as weird. Here then, again, may be one of the sources from which Gardiner had drawn some of the material he so unscrupulously utilised, for Ramsay did travel through Hazara, Central Asia, and in the Himalayas, and probably met Gardiner when that person was engaged with Gulab Singh's troops in Hazara, and to him related some of his experiences.

Ramsay's character, as given by Major Abbott, may be taken as fairly representative of the lower class of adventurers who took service with native chiefs. Abbott records under date 18th August, 1848* :—

" Hearing that an Irishman named Ramsay, who had been many years in the artillery of Arsala Khan of Ziada, was at Hazan Abdul, I sent for him. He had difficulty in expressing himself in English, from long disuse of that tongue, but speaks Pushtu fluently. He declares he has never been in British service, but I doubt him. His account is that he worked his way to Bombay as a sailor, 18 years ago, deserted his ship and joined a kafila of

* Political Diaries, Volume IV, page 382.

Mahomedans, whom he accompanied to Swat and through Central Asia. He declares that he does not know what route he came up from Bombay by. I will keep him here and see what I can make of him."

*" *September, 1848.*—I was obliged to send the European Ramsay off the field (at a mela) as he was drunk, and riding the people down. I had him up this morning, having confined him last evening. Later I pardoned him, as he seemed very penitent, and said that I might blow him from a gun if I ever caught him drunk again."

As a matter of fact, Ramsay was very useful to Abbott, for he kept him constantly informed of the movements and intentions of both the inhabitants and the semi-mutinous troops. He had already warned Abbott of more than one plot to seduce the troops from their allegiance, but at length his outrageous conduct, and extremely bad example as a European outwore his usefulness so much that Abbott was compelled to get rid of him. Here follows the closing scene in Ramsay's career, so far as we are concerned, but it is more than probable that he, like so many others of the same class, ended his days in some hovel or ditch in Lahore.

†" *December, 1848.*—To Major Lawrence : I have been obliged to send the artilleryman Ramsay down to Lahore with an escort. I had him promoted from adjutant to jemadar in the hope that I might reform him. But it was of no use. He got drunk and created a disturbance in a house of ill fame in the city, cutting down a woman who had offended him. I have kept his two wives, who did not wish to accompany him, and his infant child behind."

*Vieskenawitch.*

This person we take to be the one who appears in Carmichael Smyth's list as Vouchen, and though little is forthcoming about him, even that is valuable, as showing the varied careers of some of these men, their antecedents,

* Political Diaries, Volume IV, page 508.

† Political Diaries, Volume IV, page 510.

and the immense distances they traversed in search of military employment. He is also a link with Gardiner's narrative, for quite probably it was from Vieskenawitch that Gardiner obtained the material for those Central Asian adventures he wove into his Rougemontic narratives. The resemblance is too remarkable to be coincidence when we note that both men served Gulab Singh, and that Vieskenawitch was also demanded from the Governor of Peshawar when Ranjit Singh heard of his skill as an artilleryman.

The account written by the news-writer at Lahore* states that Vieskenawitch was a Russian Georgian, who when about 18 years of age had left home. Finding no employment he joined a band of wandering robbers who infested Central Asia and remained with them for three years, or so. At the end of this period the band was cut to pieces in a battle with a rival band of Turkomans, and Vieskenawitch, who escaped, then drifted into Persia where he obtained military employment with Abbas Mirza, and in this service eventually attained the rank of Colonel.

He left this service for the same reason as Court and Oms, and again passing through Central Asia, experiencing many curious adventures, more or less faithfully set down by Gardiner, he arrived at Peshawar in January, 1829. Here he was employed by Pir Mahomed Khan to train his artillery, and did so well in this capacity that when Ranjit Singh heard of him, he demanded him from Pir Mahomed Khan. Vieskenawitch arrived at Lahore in March, 1830, a date which should be compared with that of Gardiner's arrival. Though he had been claimed as an artilleryman, he was not entertained as such, possibly because his reported acquirements were not equal to expectations.

He was given a battalion in the service of Gulab Singh, by whom he was employed in Hazara and Kashmir

* Punjab Records, Book No. 97, Letter No. 8.

for the next four or five years. Getting tired of continual service in the hills, he applied to Ranjit Singh for a battalion, and on this being rejected, resigned the service in April, 1835, and passed on to Gwalior.

*Henry Charles Van Cortlandt.*

This person was the son of Colonel Van Cortlandt, of the 19th Dragoons, by an Indian woman, and was born at Meerut in the year 1814.

Contrary to the usual custom of British officers having like connections, who usually allowed their offspring to shift for themselves, Major Van Cortlandt had his son educated in England, and when in 1832 the young man returned to India, actively interested himself in obtaining for him employment with Ranjit Singh. There still exists a letter administering a severe rebuke from the Government of India to Colonel Van Cortlandt, then of the 31st Foot, for having "presented himself at a native court with the object of advancing his son's interests."

Van Cortlandt, when engaged in June, 1832, was given command of a Mussulman battalion, on a salary of Rs. 250 per month, which was later commuted for a jaghir nominally worth Rs. 6,000 per annum, but really considerably more. We are not able to trace his war service with the Khalsa army, and the first we hear of him after the initial mention is as commander of the escort which conducted Sher Singh into the fort after the taking of Fort Lahore. Though he was present in Lahore during this siege he does not appear to have taken any part in the operations.

Soon after this, his command was increased to two battalions, and later this force was augmented by a battalion of jesailchis and two companies of sappers and miners, with whom he served in the Hazara district in 1843. After the assassination of Sher Singh, his battalions returned to Lahore without orders, probably with the intention of securing their share of the slaughter and

plunder, then so liberally forthcoming in Lahore. Van Cortlandt accompanied them, but was in no way molested by his troops. Henry Lawrence assigns the following reason for this forbearance:—

*" *January, 1843.*—Mr. Cortlandt never had any influence with his men, and was only suffered to remain in command when better men were driven from the lines, because he was weak and submissive. He is not likely to create a disturbance, but still less likely to quell one."

This scathing summary was, as Van Cortlandt's later career will show, totally undeserved, and can only be explained by assuming that like so many others of the adventurer class, Van Cortlandt had incurred the dislike of Lawrence, who though so religious and philanthropic a man, was, as is not uncommon with such, vindictive to those whom he disliked. It is very difficult to see what otherwise Van Cortlandt could have done. He was a family man, and as such could not afford to lose either his life, or his employment, and to take active measures in opposing his men would have simply resulted in the useless sacrifice of his life.

Up to 1844 Van Cortlandt was employed in the Hazara district, and early in that year took leave to Mussoorie, where he remained until January, 1845. In that month he arrived at Ferozepur and requested permission from Major Broadfoot the Political officer there to pass over into the Punjab. This was refused, for Broadfoot was fully aware of the impending danger from the unruly Khalsa army, and declined to permit either Van Cortlandt, or any other European to resume duty with the Khalsa. His estimate of Van Cortlandt differs considerably from that of Lawrence, for he describes him as an extremely able man, and "an intriguer whose presence would be most undesirable in Lahore at that time."

The position was certainly critical, for it was only a matter of a short time before the Sikhs would break out,

* Punjab Records, Book No. 98, Letter No. 136.

and already their emissaries were active in the British military stations on the Punjab Frontier, seducing or endeavouring to seduce the sepoys from their allegiance by promises of high pay or rank in the Khalsa army, and according to the Punjab Records, a number of cavalrymen did desert. Gardiner alleges that these were of the Governor-General's bodyguard, but that is incorrect, for they belonged to the 2nd Cavalry, later the initiators of the great Mutiny.

Van Cortlandt was detained at Ferozepur until December, 1845, when having convinced the Political Agent of the honesty of his intentions, he was employed as a political assistant and in this capacity was present at the battles of Ferozeshah and Sobraon, for which he was later awarded medals, but he was not given the six months' extra pay permitted to all officers who took part in the Punjab War.

On the 10th March, 1846, he was reinstated in the Khalsa army with the rank of colonel and the command of a brigade equalling his former. Having always been a favourite with the Sikh sirdars, the Wazir at their request proposed to increase Van Cortlandt's pay and importance by increasing his command to that of a general, and awarding him that rank. Both of these proposals were vetoed by Henry Lawrence, the one as unnecessary, and the other as not desirable. However, in compensation, the Wazir circumvented Lawrence by settling a personal jaghir of Rs. 1,000 per annum on Mrs. Van Cortlandt, and making his infant son a jemadar of artillery, with a pay of Rs. 50 per month.

The Wazir also proposed to employ the elder Van Cortlandt, but this again was vetoed by Henry Lawrence, who remarked that " the elder Van Cortlandt was physically and intellectually feeble "—an estimate possibly quite true, for the old man had joined the 27th Light Dragoons in 1795. John Lawrence, who succeeded his

brother, when the latter was removed for reasons best known to the Government, always treated Van Cortlandt with a consideration his services and merits deserved, reporting that his brigade "was a very serviceable and well-trained body of men." This brigade, consisting of four battalions, three batteries, 1,000 horse, and some sappers and miners, was quite a formidable force, and its efficiency is shown by the fact that Herbert Edwardes, who never gave credit unless it was very richly deserved, frequently commended both Van Cortlandt and his men, and in this John Lawrence concurred.

When the rebellion at Multan broke out, the Resident at Lahore decided that it was too hot for British troops to move, but as it was absolutly necessary that some action should be taken Edwardes was directed to attack Mul Raj together with a contingent from Bahawalpur. How well Cortlandt and his troops behaved is recorded not only in the despatches sent in by Edwardes but in his book "A Year on the Punjab Frontier." The enemy was defeated in several actions, and these successes were followed up by equally good behaviour before Multan itself.

Yet though the Government of India permitted Van Cortlandt to receive the medal for the siege of Multan they declined to give or obtain for him the six months' pay awarded as field batta on the ground that he was still in the durbar service. Technically they were right, but, as the refusal placed Van Cortlandt in a less satisfactory position as regards reward than many who had done much less, he was naturally rather sore about it.

He took part in some of the battles of the Second Sikh War and after the annexation of the Punjab his services received a well deserved reward by his being appointed to the Provincial Civil Service and made Deputy Commissioner of the Montgomery* District. In this service he gradually rose until in 1857 he was Com-

* Then known as Gujaira.

missioner of the Ferozepur District. Mindful of his past military record and connection with the Sikhs, the Government of India called upon Van Cortlandt to raise troops from the disbanded Sikh soldiers of the Khalsa and other sources, and finally gave him command of a field force with which he did good service in clearing the Ferozepur and adjoining districts of the rebels, and keeping order amongst the restless population.

So well were his services appreciated that when he retired it was on the full pay and allowances of a Colonel of British Infantry in the enjoyment of which he died in London in the year 1888.

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*Leslie or Rattray.*

As with so many of Ranjit Singh's officers Rattray (which was the real name of this person) suddenly appears on the stage as Commandant of a battalion of Khalsa Infantry in the year 1834, his salary being Rs. 150 per month.

Though this starting pay indicates that he had not previously served as an officer in a European army, Rattray was undoubtedly a man of superior education for both his natural and acquired abilities enabled him to cheat the Frenchman Argoud out of a battalion in the service of Dost Mahomed.

It is possible that he may have been a discreditable member of that Rattray family which figures so frequently in the Company's services at this time, some as sea captains and others as civil servants and lawyers. As he was apparently a trained soldier on the other hand, he may have been one of those well educated scamps who took refuge in the Company's army either to escape the law or from a spirit of pure adventure. Why he left Ranjit Singh's service after about two years is nowhere stated, but as he is shown as having deserted there must have been

something fishy to cause such an abrupt, and secret departure into Afghan territory.

He obtained the command of a battalion, if the mob of ill armed and disorderly rascals he commanded at Ali Masjid can be called one, in the manner described in our article on Argoud, and with it was present at the battle of Jumrood, where according to the following, his presence of mind and military prescience turned the scale in favour of the Afghans :—

*" The Sikhs thinking the battle won, dispersed to plunder when a reserve under an Englishman named Rattray, seizing the critical moment rushed on the disordered Sikhs, and drove them back to their entrenchments where they held them for some days until the arrival of General Allard with reinforcements enabled them to again push forward."

It was soon after this that Rattray encountered Burnes and Wood then on their way to Kabul and from the latter's book takes the following amusing account of Rattray and his tactics† :—

" A short distance from the entrance to the pass we saw some Sikh scalps lightly covered with earth in the middle of the road. We wound up the pass to the Fort of Ali Masjid where we were received by its Commandant an ill-conditioned, slipshod, turbaned Englishman, dissipated looking and clad in a kind of Afghan deshabille. His abode was a cave in the mountains from which he and his hungry followers issued forth to levy blackmail on the passing kafilas. The Sikh Fortress of Jumrood was at this period dependent for water on a stream that ran through the Khyber, and the chief occupation of the Lieut.-Colonel, for so he styled himself, was to stop this supply and let it run again after being bribed to do so.

" Lieut.-Colonel Rattray received us at the head of his column which being drawn up for the occasion had something of a military look, but no sooner did the Commandant attempt to manœuvre than a most ludicrous

* A Journey to the Sources of the Oxus, pages 159—61.

† *Ibid.*

scene ensued. In utter hopelessness of restoring his scattered legion to order, he disbanded it forthwith, and then commenced whacking his men with a cudgel. But he was soon overwhelmed by force of numbers, and forced to desist. In the evening he came to enquire with all military formalities what were the orders for to-morrow's march, and then took occasion to point out to Captain Burnes an error in his narrative, assuring him that though forty bottles of wine might formerly have been procurable for a rupee in Kabul nothing like that number was now obtainable. The Lieut.-Colonel spoke feelingly.

" Before retiring to rest he requested with a degree of quiet impudence, which was quite meritorious, a loan of Rs. 500 to defray the expenses of the march, for which he gravely tendered a pay order on his regimental paymaster at Kabul. Failing in this expedient he hit upon that of quartering his men upon the mission and to accomplish this issued an order, which as a specimen of bombast, was quite a curiousity. A Captain's Guard was ordered to one place, a Subaltern's to another till the whole lean crew were disposed of. The result was that the provisions Dost Mahomed had intended for us were made over to these hungry soldiers.

" When Mr. Rattray became acquainted with our different pursuits, he made the round of the camp, and waited upon us individually proffering for a consideration to put us each in possession of the information he had amassed during a long sojourn in those countries. To Dr. Lord he promised an account of the rivers in Khorasan, and the site of all the valuable ores between the Indus and Kabul. To Lieut. Leach the military resources of kingdoms and states from Lahore to Meshed, and from Sindh to Kashmir; to me a map of half the Continent of Asia, in which should be delineated every river and mountain chain, and every town and route.

" He borrowed from Captain Burnes the volumes of his travels and those of Forster and Elphinstone, and from these and his own imagination he would, had we encouraged him, have furnished us with a full and particular account of countries he had never seen, nor heard of, and tribes the very existence of which he was till then unaware of. Some time after when we were in Kabul this man

became a Mahomedan, much against the will of Dost Mahomed, who thought him a disgrace to any creed, and expressed his strong contempt for men who to improve their condition would change their religion."

The Khyber commandant was altogether a singular character, clever and well informed but totally devoid of all moral principle. His autobiography written at the request of Captain Burnes affords another proof of how often the real events of life exceed the wildest conceptions of fiction.

It was undoubtedly this account which inspired Gardiner to concoct his Rougemontic narrative. The incident of the diary which was made over to Captain Burnes was certainly pirated from this account. But as with Gardiner's narrative we wonder how much of Rattray's were actual experiences, and how much the fruits of that lively imagination with which he is credited.

However, Rattray did not stay much longer in the service of Dost Mahomed for under date 31st December, 1838, the Lahore newswriter records* :—

" Mr. Rattray who was in command of the Ali Masjid Fort, has deserted from the service of Dost Mahomed and gone to Bajour." A later report from Captain Wade states that—

" A person named Rattray who was formerly in the service of Ranjit Singh from which he deserted has now found his way to Bajour, and, I understand, gives himself out as an emissary of the British Government. I have written to the Bajour Chief, contradicting this assertion and have returned, unanswered, several letters which Mr. Rattray has addressed to me with a view to giving colour to his assertions. He will in all likelihood address you (assistant at Karnal) next. So that it is as well that you should be aware of his reputation and character."

We hear no more of Rattray either in the records or elsewhere, but may here mention that during the Chitral

* Punjab Records, Book No. 111, Letter No. 5.

Campaign of 1895, there was a rumour that Umra Khan of Bajour who gave us so much trouble was the son of an Englishman. None of us fully believed it but stranger things might have happened. But it is more probable that when the Bajour Khan found out how he had been befooled he put it out of the power of Rattray to deceive anyone else by the method well known to such folks.

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*Robert Dick.*

A brief report from the Punjab newswriter concerning Dick states that he was the illegitimate son of Major-General Sir Robert Dick, of the 42nd Highlanders, a distinguished officer, who had served in the Peninsula, at Waterloo, and was killed at the Battle of Sobraon. His mother was an Indian woman.

Whether by his own efforts, or by those of his father, young Dick obtained a commission in the Gwalior forces, and later a local lieutenancy in Skinner's horse, the European element amongst the officers of which were mostly of the same kind. For some reason not clearly stated, but hinted at, Dick either quitted, or was dismissed from, Skinner's horse, in 1831, and the next we hear of him is as in company with Campbell employed by Shah Shujah, to raise and train a body of Hindustanis for the abortive attempt to regain the throne of Kabul.

Dick soon fell out with the Shah, and taking with him some 300 Hindustanis belonging to the forces, set out to seek other service, and was successful in finding it with the Amir of Sindh, for we find the newswriter's report of June 5th, 1834, that*—

" Mr. Dick has been placed in charge of five guns and has received Rs. 900 on account of his salary, regarding which no final arrangements have been made. He has also been honoured by being presented with a gold pendant and two silk flags, highly ornamented with gold

* Punjab Records, Book No. 101, Letter No. 27.

and silver embroidery. On receiving these compliments he made a great feast to all the Amir's khidmatgars, and fired salvos of guns. Mr. Dick is not to be given up to any of the powers, *should they demand his surrender*. No one is to be appointed over him, and neither the Amir nor his officers are to be allowed to interfere with him. He is to be allowed to visit his country whenever he chooses, and to appoint anybody he chooses to command his troops during his absence."

Evidently, Mr. Dick was providing for contingencies, for to judge from other references, he had not only taken three hundred of the Shah's troops with him, but perhaps, absent-mindedly, the pay of the other half of the battalion. His pay was eventually fixed at Rs. 500 per month, his duties including the training of the gunners, and matters proceeded peacefully for a few weeks, until a subedar of Dick's battalion, who had served with him, arrived at Kotri with some more of the battalion, and demanded a share of the money Dick had walked off with.

The demand was contemptuously refused, Dick making a countercharge against the Subedar of having made away with a lot of property left with him when Dick himself had hastily departed, and so a very pretty little quarrel arose, the result being that under date, July 26th, 1834, the newswriter mentions that :—

*The Subedar, Behari Lal, and Mr. Dick, are continually fighting and abusing each other, and in consequence Mr. Dick has been given orders to reside at Kotri, on the opposite bank of the river. He and the Subedar continually abuse each other, even in durbar, and sometimes fire guns across the river."

Apparently they were thoroughly enjoying themselves. In any case, there is no report of anyone having been killed, but whether they eventually made peace or not, is not stated. Probably they did not, for when Mr. Dick, whose appetite for strong liquors was far greater than his ability to withstand their effects†, died from that

* Punjab Records, Book No. 105, Letter No. 56.
† Punjab Records, Book No. 105, Letters Nos. 101 and 113.

cause, combined with fever, in 1835, the newswriter reports that the Hindustani troops having refused to serve under the Subedar, had disbanded themselves and gone back to Hindustan.

Poor Mr. Dick! His career and fate are typical of those of the majority of the more obscure adventurers in Indian services most of whom lived as hectic a life and died as unknown and unhonoured as Dick, save by the men they had commanded.

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### *Dottenweiss*
### or
### *Dotterwich.*

This name, which was borrowed by Gardiner to affix to one of his imaginary travelling companions, was actually that of a German, who arrived at Lahore in 1835. There is nothing concerning him in the Records, except the mere mention that he had arrived at Lahore and failing to find employment, had passed on. Major McGregor, to whom we are indebted for some details concerning the lesser known adventurers, remarks of Dotterwich, though omitting his name* :—

"A German adventurer made his appearance at the court in 1835. Representing himself as well versed in military tactics, he applied for employment. His own assertions did not satisfy the Maharajah, who required something more, and to put him to the test, ordered out a few companies of infantry. This test was more than the man bargained for, and a complete failure was the result. After remaining a few weeks at Amritsar, he was given leave to depart and a present of Rs. 100 and some shawls. On being asked by Ranjit Singh whether he intended to proceed to Kabul and join Dost Mahomed, he replied that he did; whereupon Ranjit remarked that nothing pleased him better than to see such men in the military service of his enemy."

* McGregor's History of the Sikhs, Volume I, page 258.

What became of Dotterwich during the next few years is explained in the account of his adventures given to Dr. Mitford by him in 1840. The Doctor was making his way overland through Central Asia to Ceylon, and being taken ill with fever at Meshed, was visited by Dotterwich. The account runs*:—

"While I was recovering from the fever, I was lying on my bed one morning, when a visitor was announced, and a short, stout built man, of fair, but coarse complexion and hair, entered the room and took his seat on the cushions; he was dressed in the hybrid dress of the Persian officers, frock coat and belt, and the black lambskin cap; he addressed me in good English, and told me the Governor had informed him of my arrival, and sent him to offer me any assistance as a fellow countryman, which he supposed all Europeans must be. Delighted to hear my native tongue, although with a German accent. I warmly greeted my new acquaintance, who gave me an account of himself and his adventures, both interesting and pleasing.

"'I speak English, Mynheer, but I am a German, and my name is Dotterwich. It is some time ago that I came to India to seek my fortune; my first speculation was in indigo planting at Calcutta, but the business did not suit me and I was unsuccessful; having some knowledge of mining, I was afterwards employed by the East India Company, exploring for minerals in the Himalayas near Simla, but this employment did not last long, and I again found myself without occupation. I wished to enter the service of some of the native princes in India; but as they were all controlled by the English Government, I found it difficult for a stranger to gain an entrance; so I made my way to Afghanistan and offered my services to the Shah of Herat.

"'Kamaran Shah took me into his service, and I disciplined his troops in the European style and drank schnapps with himself; the old Shah is found of schnapps, and many a jolly drinking bout we had together; and I soon became his chief favourite. I thought I had found

* Mitford's Land Journey, etc., to Ceylon, pages 38—41.

a resting place, and that I had nothing more to do but settle here and banish care; but I reckoned without my host, for the old villain of a vizier, Yar Mahomed, had his eye upon me ; you will see him at Herat, and a greater villain you will never have seen before ; but I will tell you more another time; but to return to my own affairs.

" ' The Shah's love for me was so great that he made me a grant of a large village with all its lands and revenues, and I set to work to improve my estate, whose climate was as beautiful as in our Fatherland. I planted fruit trees and settled labourers, to whom I advanced money and seed grain, and brought it into beautiful order and cultivation. I knew all this time that the vizier was my enemy, his jealousy being excited by the favour shown me by the Shah; but trusting to my own influence with Kamran (in which I afterwards found I had acted like a fool), I set Yar Mahomed at defiance, and on one occasion that he offered me strong provocation, I went so far as openly to apply to him terms not the most complimentary in the Persian language, but the words I do not remember.

" ' The vizier put his hand on his mouth, but his eyes blazed as though they would have scorched me; his revenge was slow but sure; he had been long concentrating all power into his own hands, and, as soon as he felt himself strong enough to defy the Shah, from his rival I became his victim. I am no longer a politician, Mynheer; I am a soldier : but every man in these countries should be an intriguer, or he is never safe.

" ' How could I suppose that the Shah would so soon be powerless? for he was able, but the schnapps had ruined him, and the vizier encouraged him in drinking for his own purposes, and soon reduced him to little better than a prisoner in his house. For myself, I had no suspicion of what was going on, but reposed in security, calculating how long it would take me to realise sufficient to enable me to return to my own country, when one morning my house was surrounded by a party of sowars; I was seized, hurried out and fastened to a horse; and the party having mounted, set off at a rapid pace across the plains in the direction of Meshed.

" 'At first I had expected to be put to death at once, but finding we were speeding over the country, I began to have some hopes, for if they wished to take my life, such a journey was quite unnecessary. On, on we rode, leaving the cultivated country behind us; we left Ghorian south of us, and kept on over the Turkoman deserts, but it was not long before I succeeded in ascertaining the intentions of my captors concerning me. We could not have ridden less than fifty or sixty miles, when they halted; nothing was visible all around but broad, grassy plains, with distant mountains in the northern horizon; the party here dismounted and I was unbound.

" 'Well Frangi,' said the leader, 'You thought yourself better than the Douranee, and now what ashes have fallen on your head! You would compete with viziers, and now you will be a slave of the Turkomans! Know that we expected to find the Turkomans on these plains; they have had notice of our coming, but they have failed in their appointment; we will therefore leave you and return.'

" 'The horrors of the fact prepared for me by Yar Mahomed now burst upon me ; I was sold a slave to the Turkomans, and their non-appearance only left me in the alternative of dying of starvation and exhaustion on these interminable plains, on which the smallest object could be discerned from afar by the wandering hordes.

" 'He then informed me that the party of horse galloped off, leaving him alone on this boundless waste, with threats of death if he ever returned to Herat, of which there was little probability; for, if he escaped being discovered and taken by the Turkomans, he must die of starvation, the nearest safe place being Meshed, from which he was one hundred and sixty miles. I doubt whether he enjoyed the solitary grandeur of his position; but he was not doomed to perish, for, after wandering about, not knowing which direction to take, he was found exhausted by another party of horse belonging to the Governor of Meshed, who were on the look-out for these Turkoman plunderers.

" 'He would have welcomed them had they been the latter, to take him into lifelong slavery in Bokhara, but was fortunate in finding friends. He told his story to the

Chief, who was a son of the Governor Ausuf-ud-Dowla, who took him to Meshed, and took him into his service, and he now was employed drilling his troops, and was settled in the country, although he had not changed his religion, like many other adventurers.

" ' He bitterly lamented the loss of his lands, and his folly in quarrelling with Yar Mahomed, and indulged some hopes of being able to return. He told me the Persian pay was nominally very good, but very difficult to be got; he was eight hundred tomans in arrears, for which he was continually applying to Mirza Ali, who, however, was not to be moved without a bribe of at least one-third of that amount; this Dotterwich consented to give; but not satisfied with this, the Mirza would not subtract it from the sum due, but required ready money in advance, before he took any steps in the affair. Even had he possessed money, Dotterwich knew the Persians too well to throw good money after bad in this gratuitous style.' "

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*Stephen Lane.*

The name of this person does not appear in the Khalsa pay-rolls, and the only details concerning him we have been able to collect are from the Punjab Records, the first of which mentions that in September, 1834, a person named Lane, supposed to be an Englishman, and a deserter from the Company's Horse Artillery, has arrived at Lahore in search of employment. This description is corrected by the second report, which states* :—

" *23rd December, 1834.*—Mr. Lane is an Armenian, who served some years in Scindia's brigades and rose to the rank of Lieutenant. He has been admitted to Ranjit Singh's service, and entrusted with the command of a battalion. He is in great favour, for this is a distinction which the Maharajah does not usually confer on an adventurer of this class."

However, eighteen months later Lane was dismissed from service, and deported to Ludhiana, from whence he

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* Punjab Records, Book No. 94, Letter No. 27.

sent up several complaints to the Government of India, asking for pressure to be put on Ranjit Singh for the arrears of pay due him. Whether he got them or not we know not. It may here be mentioned that a letter concerning Lane places no prohibition on the passage of Greeks or Armenians into the Punjab, and apparently they were not considered very formidable as instructors or fighting men.

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*Francis.*

This is another of the men who flit hurriedly through the Records, our only record being a fugitive notice or two. Concerning Francis, the newswriter, on July 25th, 1834, writes* :—

"A Frenchman of the name of Francis, who says he was formerly in the service of the King of Persia, and has lately been employed by Ranjit Singh, has arrived at Hyderabad (Sind). The Amirs offered to entertain him, provided he would serve under Mr. Dick; which proposal he declined as well as one to become Nasir Khan's personal servant on Rs. 6 per day. He has now gone to seek service with the King at Kandahar."

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* Punjab Records, Book No. 105, Letter No. 56.

# CHAPTER XV

JACOB THOMAS — FOULKES — HENRY STEINBACH — MATTHEW WILLIAM FORD — BENOIT ARGOUD — DE COURCY — DUBUIGNON — BIANCHI — FRANCOIS HENRI MOUTON — HURBONS — LA FONT (1) — LA FONT (2) — HENRI DE LA ROCHE — DR. BENET — DR. HARVEY.

## *Jacob Thomas.*

Jacob Thomas, who was the fourth son of the 18th century adventurer, George Thomas, presents a very different presonality to that of his father, and was a fair example of that degeneration which takes place when children of mixed blood are brought up in an Indian environment.

Previous to joining the Khalsa, Thomas had served for some years with Begum Sumru, but when, consequent upon her death, the Sardhana forces were broken up, he, like others, sought and obtained service with Ranjit Singh. He entered the Khalsa service in March, 1838, as Commandant of a battalion of Mussulmans, on a salary of Rs. 300 per month. We find nothing concerning him in the Khalsa pay-rolls, and but little in the Punjab Records, so that it is fortunate from our point of view that some contemporary writers have left a few brief mentions of him, which are also especially interesting as showing the condition of the Khalsa army before and after the death of Ranjit Singh, and how little control any of the officers had over the men. We quote from Barr* :—

" *Peshawar, March, 1838.*—Colonel Jacob Thomas, a half caste, commands the najib regiment, and is a son of the celebrated General Thomas of so much notoriety in India at the close of the last century. He is, I under-

* Barr's Journal, pages 222-23.

stand, a dull heavy man, and the efficiency of his regiment, as well as his own authority may be judged from the circumstances that when his regiment was ordered the other day to move their camp, he came to complain to Colonel Wade that though he had issued the necessary orders for them to do so, not a single individual attended to them.........

*" On the 14th inst. a mutiny occurred in the najib regiment which but too plainly showed how slight was the discipline that existed amongst the Sikhs (the najibs were Punjabi Mussulmans) and very forcibly exhibited to us the qualities of the allies who are co-operating with us when required. I have already alluded to the little authority possessed by Colonel Jacob Thomas over his men. They had now become altogether dissatisfied with him, and, taking the law into their own hands, had turned him and his adjutant out of their camp, levelled their tents to the ground, and declared that they would not have anything more to do with either of them.

" As a mark of *respect* for their Colonel, they inverted his chair on the spot where he usually sat, and then, having shotted their guns, quietly awaited the results of their misconduct. Dislike to the officers they had thus summarily got rid of, want of pay, and the unfair manner in which they had been sent to Peshawar (their present appearance in this province being the third within a short period) were amongst the alleged causes of grievance; but to show that they had no ill-will towards us, they planted their sentries as usual at sunset; and when directed to parade by Colonel Wade, did so at once. He, however, told them they could no longer form a part of his camp, and in a few days they removed their ground, I believe, to the Sikh cantonments."

However, Jacob Thomas and his mob of mutineers were later pardoned, for it was impossible to send them to Lahore, as the relieving troops might have been worse. They took part in the forcing of the Khyber Pass, in which only Khalsa troops were employed, and as the conduct of the whole was very favourably commented upon by the political officers, we may assume that the najibs did

* Barr's Journal, pages 222-23.

their fair share of good work. In accordance with the conditions of the Tripartite Treaty, which stipulated that only Mussulman troops should accompany Shah Shujah, or the British, to Kabul, the same battalion went on to Kabul, and after the enthronement of the Shah, returned to India early in 1841.

Being stationed in the Hazara, not at Peshawar, during the troubles of the anarchy Thomas escaped participation, or being involved in them, but was dismissed by Pandit Julla when he got rid of most of the remaining Europeans, and then returned to Sardhana from whence he repeatedly appealed to the Resident at Lahore and the Durbar Government for compensation for loss of employment, and past good services.

Eventually his pertinacity was rewarded by a grant of Rs. 2,000 which was made over to the Catholic Bishop of Sardhana for payment to Thomas for apparently (like his father) he could neither read nor write English.

Though Barr writes scathingly concerning the inability of Jacob Thomas to maintain order amongst his men he does not appear to have been much worse than some of the pure Europeans, such as Steinbach. Even if he had been, an inferiority complex soon develops in persons, on whom their inferiority of race or class is pressed. Only the very strongest can rise above their environment.

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*Foulkes.*

Judging by the following quotation which was written just at that time Foulkes entered the Khalsa service, we may doubt if the name under which he usually passed was his real one.

**Calcutta Journal, 1836.*—"Runjeet contemplated sending a Mr. Farquharson whose military abilities are highly spoken of, with Nau Nehal Singh to effect the conquest of Shikarpore when the rains have broken."

* Punjab Records, Book No. 192, Letter No. 199.

According to the Khalsa Records Foulkes, if that was his real name, entered the Khalsa service in February, 1836, as Commandant of the Narsingh Regiment (*sic*) his starting salary being Rs. 600 per month. On indicating that he had formerly served as an officer in a European Army, and to judge by the fact that Foulkes was known to and accepted as an equal by the Royal and Company's officers who passed through Lahore at different times, he *must* have served in one of these*. In fact one of them (Barr) mentions that Foulkes was a schoolmate of his, which may have been at some English school.

But if Foulkes had served in the Company's Army it must have been before 1833 for from that date to 1836 we have carefully searched the General Orders for any Gazette Notification that he had either resigned, or been dismissed. Most probably his military service must have been in the Royal Army, and, indeed we have some vague recollection of having once been told that he had served with the 31st Foot. Very curiously, none of those who had known him before his entry into the Khalsa service and speak of him, omit any mention of what he had been previously, and this, coupled with the fact that his wife was in England during the whole of his service with the Khalsa, having probably been sent there when he left the Army, in which he had gained his military knowledge, seems to indicate something suspicious.

If so he must have been unfortunate for by all accounts he was a gentleman of high character. To judge by the fact that a heavy wine bill was paid by his executor, his failing may have been drink. Of him Major McGregor writes :—

†"Mr. Foulkes, an Englishman proceeded to the Punjab in 1835 and ever since that date has been actively employed with the Sikh Army. He is a gentleman of pleasing manners, and being determined to surmount any

* Calcutta Journal, 1836, page 548.

† History of the Sikhs, Volume I, page 257.

difficulty, will ultimately succeed to an important appointment though the delays and disappointments he has already experienced would be sufficient to daunt the prospects of a less zealous soldier " (written in 1838).

But unfortunately for Foulkes his nationality was against him for, though outwardly friendly and willing to co-operate, Ranjit Singh greatly distrusted the English, and on this account would never have permitted an Englishman to attain any high command in his service. Foulkes usually acted as aide-de-camp to Ventura, and when the latter went on the expedition to the Mandi and Kulu hills, accompanied him where according to the following mention by De Vigne, he distinguished himself. De Vigne writes* :—

" My poor friend, Colonel Foulkes, had distinguished himself during the Siege of Ambota, a virgin fortress which he took with his own troops. He was left at Mandi when Ventura departed for Lahore, and when later the men mutinied, he was advised by them to depart at once, and not to interfere. This, however, he gallantly refused to do. In the night he was awakened by the cries of his orderly, who called upon him to escape, but before he could do so he was cut down by the soldiers who rushed into his tent. A funeral pile was heaped up, and he was thrown upon it by his ruffianly Sikhs and the flame applied while life was yet in him.

" I saw a good deal of him when on the West of the Sutlej, and had often pitied him under circumstances of great irritation, anxiety and suspense, occasioned by that aggravating delay of decision which Ranjit Singh was generally remarkable, when any one whom he could bully a little with impunity came to him seeking service. I am happy to be able to record from my own knowledge public and honourable mention of a young Englishman who sought his fortune in those countries. His conduct and feeling seem to me to be always that of an officer and gentleman, and a man who was too self-respecting to be servile, and too high-minded to intrigue."

* DeVigne's Travels in Kashmir, Volume I, page 130.

Lawrence, writing in the Calcutta Review, adds more details :—

"Just before his murder, Mr. Foulkes had been warned to escape, but had too high a sense of duty to do so when his battalion was on active service. It is a curious coincidence that in the year 1838, when we asked him what he would do in the case of a mutiny, he laughed and said : 'Make a bolt for it.' But when the time came he acted otherwise. At the interview alluded to, an officer present, who had been a schoolfellow of Foulkes (Barr) mentioned that when they had met before, Foulkes was thrashing the Major. The Major in the Sikh service was the Sergeant-major, and striking such an officer, or indeed anyone below one's own rank, is not uncommon in the Sikh Army. This anecdote may give the impression that Foulkes was a violent man and disliked by his men. He was neither one nor the other, any more than General Court, and had both been like Avitabile, they would have fared better."

Though on the strong representations of the Government of India, Sher Singh promised to have the offenders arrested and executed, and sent orders to Kulu to that effect, they were neither apprehended nor punished, for a reply was returned by the Sikh General who had succeeded Ventura that they had either absconded, or were not traceable. This was quite incorrect, for the ringleader an Adjutant named Urbail Singh was well known, and continued in the service until 1848 when he was in Hazara, and the principal agent in bringing about the death of Kanara.

The last mention of Foulkes in the records or elsewhere is by a letter from M. Mouton transmitted by the Political Assistant at Ludhiana to a firm of lawyers in Calcutta forwarding a sum of Rs. 5,070-0-0 arrears due to the estate of the late Colonel Foulkes and to be paid to his widow in England to which is appended her acknowledgment and thanks to both the Durbar and M. Mouton.*

* Punjab Records, Book No. 87, Letter No. 137.

Foulkes was one of the many English *ex*-officers who entered the Sikh services at different times with high hopes, none of which were fulfilled for their nationality was always against them.

*Henry Steinbach.*

This individual was a Prussian who entered the Khalsa service in 1836 as a battalion commander on a starting salary of Rs. 600 increased to Rs. 800 by 1841. Curiously enough, though a German, Steinbach must have had some experience of English methods for he was engaged to "instruct a battalion on the English system." However, it may have been that, as in after years, the English system was copied from the German.

Steinbach who was an educated man of literary tastes eventually published a little book on the Punjab and its History, which as usual with such publications met with disapproval from Lawrence who was always very severe on writers on the Punjab, or the Sikhs. We are unable to trace up the war services of Steinbach except that he was at Peshawar in 1838 and 1841 and in the latter year the battalion he commanded signalised itself as the most disorderly amongst an army rather distinguished in that way to judge by the following report from Lawrence* :—

*10th June, 1841.*—The Kashmira Battalion commanded by Colonel Steinbach called out their colonel and directed him to proceed to Lahore, and represent their demands to Maharajah Sher Singh. Before he left on the 5th instant they warned him that if he did not obtain all they wanted from the Maharajah the whole battalion would on his return†......................................

Not relishing his threatened fate Steinbach departed as speedily as possible leaving his command to be dealt with by Avitabile who did so very faithfully and

* Punjab Records, Book No. 40, Letter No. 120.

† Those who desire fuller details are referred to Gulliver's Travels, and the method by which he extinguished the fire in the Lilliput palace.

according to their deserts as will be found in his memoir. When Steinbach did return to Peshawar his battalion, or rather the survivors having been broken up, he was given that vacant by the death of Matthew Ford, and with it returned to Lahore in 1843, when it left Peshawar without orders in order to share in the good things going at Lahore.

As soon as he arrived he obtained a year's leave to Europe from which he returned in May, 1844, to find that the Durbar was not desirous of retaining his services. Failing to get reinstated he applied to Gulab Singh who gave him command of a couple of battalions and some guns. He saw considerable service in Kashmir for the next four years, and in 1848 was detailed to join the forces under Herbert Edwardes before Multan. He did not do, for the wily Raja did not desire to commit himself actively, so Steinbach's troops were by his orders so long on the road that not only this, but the Second Punjab War was over before they joined the British.

He remained with Gulab Singh until 1851 taking part in the subjugation of Kashmir and the surrounding countries, which had been included in the cession. In 1851 he resigned the service in a fit of pique at being superseded whilst on active service in Chilas, by an Indian commander, and appealed to the British to induce Gulab Singh to restore him to his original appointment. The appeal is still in the Punjab archives, as is the endorsement by the Governor-General, that Gulab Singh being an independent prince, they had neither power nor inclination to interfere with his military arrangements. Perhaps unnecessarily, the Governor-General concluded by remarking that it was quite possible that the Indian was the better man of the two, whereupon Steinbach, who was then at Simla, expressed his resentment in person, and returned to Europe. The only other point of interest is that the troops whose command he vacated were later made over to Gardiner.

*Matthew William Ford.*

Matthew Ford entered the British service as an ensign in a West India Regiment in 1804, and served successively in the 7th Foot, the 70th Foot, the 1st Royal Scots, and the 22nd Light Dragoons, and being still a captain, was, in 1823, appointed paymaster to the 16th Foot, then serving in India.

The position of paymaster was usually sought after by poor men, who could not purchase further steps, for it carried with it much increased emoluments, and the holder was exempt from retirement on account of age or minor ailments. Ford served in the 16th Foot until 1837, when apparently having got his accounts into an inextricable mess, and being short of Rs. 43,000 he deserted from Karnal, and crossed the Sutlej. A subsequent enquiry disclosed the fact of this sum being missing, so Ford was tried by court-martial and in default sentenced to be cashiered from the army, and to suffer a term of imprisonment.

It was a sad ending to a long and, quite probably otherwise honourable, career, for to the disgrace was added exile, loss of pension, prospects, country, and kin, and lastly an ignominious death by violence. Being an absconding criminal, the Government of India, on ascertaining his whereabouts, addressed Ranjit Singh with a view to his surrender, but without effect, so had to content themselves with recovering a sum of Rs. 5,000 from a Civil servant named Cracroft, who had stood surety for Ford.

Though perfectly aware of Ford's antecedents, of which he had not only been informed by the British Government, but according to Sohan Lal, by De La Roche, who informed Ranjit Singh that Ford was an absconding criminal, who had made away with a large sum of money belonging to the British Government, the Maharajah employed him as a battalion commander on a salary of

Rs. 800 per month. This was later commuted for a jaghir of three villages, near Rawalpindi, of which Mackinnon remarked*: "Colonel Ford makes the best. However, this is the usual practice, but the people are now beginning to resent it"—a remark from which we may infer much.

Ford's battalion belonged to Avitabile's brigade, the whole of which at this period had European battalion commanders, in the persons of Ford, Steinbach, Foulkes and La Font. It may have been that the fact of this brigade's having all European battalion commanders added to the personality of the General, which accounts for the steadiness and efficiency of the brigade, which put up the stoutest resistance of any in the first Sikh War. Its distinguishing facings were green, and even to this day a few of the tattered red coats, once worn by Avitabile's soldiers, hang on the walls of the old Sikh armoury at Lahore.

That Ford obtained favour with the Maharajah is shown by the following quotation† :—

"*11th February, 1838, Amritsar.*—A report has just been read to the Maharajah, giving an account of Mr. Ford's hasty disposition and little ebullitions of temper when instructing his troops in their drill. This seems to afford His Highness great amusement. He asked my opinion (Lieut. Mackeson, then passing through) of Mr. Ford's merits as compared with his other officers, and told me with great glee that Mr. Ford was eager to engage in single combat with M. Court; a trial of personal prowess, which I presume, amused His Highness by the fact that both parties are remarkable for their extreme corpulence, and are therefore well matched. His Highness has shown more consideration to Mr. Ford than to any other stranger lately engaged, and has formed a high opinion of his merits and experience, probably from his mature age. He has ordered him to form a brigade to be called the English Brigade, and to be composed from his own battalion, that of Cortlandt, and another to be collected."

* Mackinnon's Military Services, page 275.

† Punjab Records, Book No. 110, Letter No. 46.



GHOORKA SEPOY, 1832.

Apparently the intention of giving Ford a separate brigade was never carried out, for in 1841 Ford was still serving with Avitabile's brigade, and engaged in operations in Hazara. As with the Kangra district, where Foulkes suffered, the contagion soon spread to Hazara, and Ford, who was not popular with his men was one of the first to suffer, the others being some native officers, who had incurred the rancour of the troops. His fate is told by the following extract :—

*" *8th April, 1841.*—Major Ford, late of Her Majesty's 16th Foot, has been attacked by the battalion he commanded in the Hazara country. He was rescued by some Gurkhas led by Colonel Steinbach, who was in the vicinity, but his injuries were very severe and he died the next day."

†We find several applications from the Government of India to the Durbar for the sum of Rs. 35,000 due by Major Ford on account of the defalcations. However, they got nothing, for curiously enough, Ford appears to have been paid up in full before his death, and the few personal effects and money with him, are reported to have been plundered by the sepoys who murdered him.

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*Benoit Argoud.*

Benoit Argoud joined the Khalsa army in November, 1836, as infantry instructor on a salary of Rs. 400 per month. We find nothing concerning his antecedents, except a mention or two in the works of Burnes and Wood, which says that he had been an officer in the French army, and after that a smuggler in the Pyrenees, a Russian spy, and an officer in the Turkish army.

Whether such a person as Argoud, whose habits were peculiar, and behaviour somewhat extraordinary at times, could ever have been a spy, or even a smuggler, seems

* Punjab Records, Book No. 151, Letter No. 42-A.
† *Ibid,* Letter No. 125.

dubious, though appearances are deceptive, and he may have concealed powers of observation and secrecy behind an apparently open and eccentric manner.

McGregor affords a few details concerning Argoud, which we quote :—

"M. Argoud continued at this work for some months, when he demanded his pay; and a day was fixed on which the Maharajah promised to inspect the recruits and pay the wages. On the day appointed, both Mr. Foulkes and M. Argoud attended the Durbar with their respective detachments of recruits. Runjeet expressed himself satisfied with their performances, and to M. Argoud he proffered a few hundred rupees in the shape of a present. But to this Argoud objected, remarking that he wanted no presents, but his arrears of pay, or as he emphatically expressed it: 'Hum talib mangta; koochh bakhsheesh nahin' (I want my pay and none of your presents). Ranjit Singh was not in a humour to make further disbursements, and M. Argoud, though he accepted the money, returned it to the prime minister on leaving the presence. This was equivalent to an insult, and the Maharajah was rather puzzled how to act for he did not wish to part with M. Argoud, whose services he justly appreciated. On the other hand, he would fain have retained him on the cheapest terms, which was a little in hand, and more at some future date. M. Argoud was resolute and would agree to nothing short of his full arrears. These he at length obtained together with leave to depart. He has since, I believe, gone to Kabul, and joined Dost Mahomed. His loss is a serious one to the Maharajah, as he was an admirable drill instructor, and would have been of infinite service, now that M. Ventura is away."

Argoud, determined to make his way to Kabul *viâ* Shikarpur and Kandahar, at Bahawalpur met Captain Burnes, from whose "Journey to Kabul" we take the following amusing account* :—

"*12th May, 1837.*—At Bahawalpur we heard of a European being in the Serai, and sent for him. He proved to be Capitaine Benoit D'Argoud, Capitaine de

* Burnes' Cabul.

l'Infanterie, who had just arrived from Lahore. He was a red hot Republican, who after we had risen from the table, the good things of which had perhaps overtaken him, continued half the night, shouting Liberty, Equality, and St. Simonianism! Early next morning he broke into my apartment, shouting that it was seven o'clock, and that I must instantly arise, for the Battle of Wagram had been fought, and his father killed before that hour.

"To crown it all, M. Argoud announced that he was *en route* to Kabul to join Dost Mahomed, and constrain him to rise the green flag and annihilate those 'canaille' of Sikhs. We concluded Monsieur to be mad, but there was a good deal of method in his madness, for he made his way safely to Kabul, by the Bolan Pass and Kandahar, which was not an easy thing to do, and afterwards I had the honour of meeting him, when he told me that he had saved himself from death by repeating the Muhammadan Kulma, or confession of faith, with the sword held over his head."

Wood, who was with Burnes, gives some more details* :—

"We were at dinner when the Frenchman arrived, but no sooner was a European announced when Burnes ran out to bring him in, and before many minutes M. Argoud had taken wine with everyone at table. The poor man's failing was soon apparent, for he proceeded to beat the tattoo with his elbows on the table, and as a tenor accompaniment, made a knife vibrate between its under surface and his thumb. It was really very clever, and the performance being highly applauded, the complaisant Frenchman knew not when to desist. Fatigue, sleep, and wine soon got the ascendant, and we saw him safely to bed.

"Next morning, at an early hour, our guest was astir, running up and down the courtyard till he chanced to stumble on Dr. Lord, engaged in dissecting and stuffing birds. Watching him for a time, he exclaimed: 'Quelle patience!' and with a shrug of his shoulders disappeared

* Wood's Journey to the Oxus, pages 69—71.

into Capt. Burnes' room. That officer was not yet dressed, on which M. Argoud called out: 'Why sare, the Battle of Wagram was fought before this hour, and you are still in deshabille? Will you take wine with me?'

"'No,' said Captain Burnes, 'I never take wine before breakfast.'

"'Then sare,' said Argoud, 'You insult me, and I demand satisfaction.'

"He ran out and soon reappeared with his small sword and asked Burnes to send for his rapier. But the latter, thinking he had humoured the fiery little Frenchman quite enough, politely requested him to continue his journey, which he accordingly did that evening. At Kabul we fell in with him a second time, so that his journey must have taken fully five months. Immediately on his arrival being known to us, Burnes sent him a kind note, asking if he could be of any service to him, but the good-hearted Frenchman was so ashamed of his conduct at Bahawalpur, and so oppressed by this unexpected return, that he could not be induced to call upon us, and on his failing to obtain employment from Dost Mahomed, set off for Peshawar without our having met him.

"We, however, learnt that on the day previous to his departure he had been employed in moulding leaden bullets, and sworn to be avenged on the Mahomedans for the ill-treatment on his journey up. The cause of his failure to obtain employment was his ignorance of the language (Persian) for Dost Mahomed was partial to him, and, though regretting his attachment to the bottle, offered him a regiment. Unfortunately for the Frenchman, the interpreter took advantage of his ignorance of the language, and in reply as to Argoud's qualifications for command, reported as his answer that, if the Amir wanted a drummer, he could not suit himself better. The Frenchman required but little pressing to beat a tattoo, and the result was that he got his discharge that evening, whilst the interpreter, a brother adventurer (Rattray?) got the regiment."

After failing at Kabul, Argoud returned to India, and drifted to Calcutta, where he arrived penniless and destitute. His application for repatriation was refused by the French Consul, so having made up his mind to

return to Lahore, he was provided with the necessary funds by some charitable French merchants of Calcutta. Instead of going to Lahore, he passed on to Kandahar, endeavouring to obtain employment with Shah Shujah, but on arrival at Kabul, found that English officers having been supplied to Shah Shujah's levies, there was no need for others.

He then returned to Peshawar, obtaining employment in Court's brigade, with which he remained until 1843, when, after the murder of Sher Singh, he quitted the service and returned to France.

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*De Courcy.*

This individual appears only in the first list of Europeans in Foreign employ sent to the Government of India from Ludhiana in 1842. He is then shown as having joined the Khalsa in 1835, as an artilleryman, to have been formerly employed at Jammu, and at the present time to be commander of the artillery of Sudh Singh, a feudatory chief on a salary of Rs. 350 per month. Against his name are the remarks: "Fled from some ship and changed his name. Formerly in Jammu," so taking all things into consideration, we are inclined to identify this aristocratically named gentleman with the mysterious person mentioned by Baron Hugel* :—

"*1835.*—Later in the evening I received a letter very well written from an Englishman in the employ of Gulab Singh, desiring to speak to me; to which I immediately acceded, and presently a fine young man, richly dressed, made his appearance in my tent. As soon as the servants were out of hearing, he flung himself at my feet without uttering a word, and burst into a passionate flood of tears! In vain I remonstrated with him. I requested him to be seated and to feel sure that I would do all I could to alleviate the distress from which he was suffering. For a long time I could not draw any explanation of this strange conduct, for the sight of a European after so long an

* Hugel's Travels in Kashmir, etc., pages 72-3.

interval, and his evident sorrow, filled me with the deepest interest and pity, to say nothing of the curiosity I felt to know the cause which had brought a man of his appearance into such a position.

" He could hardly be an adventurer, and his emotion did not seem the result of any disappointment. Besides, he wanted some aid from me, and this, to judge by his arms, dress, and jewels, could not be gold. Nothing but the consciousness of guilt could prostrate one man so abjectly before another. This, however, was no time or place to reproach a suppliant with what might be neither crime nor error on his part. Desirous of hearing some explanation of his visit, I again addressed him, saying :—

" ' Speak whatever you have to say. I promise you my best assistance and pity. How long have you been in Jammu? '

" ' Many years!' he replied.

" ' Are you poor?'

" ' No, my circumstances are good!'

" ' Then what brought you to this lonely land?'

" ' Pity me,' he exclaimed, seizing my hand convulsively. ' I am guilty. I need forgiveness. I am miserable.'

" ' I must insist on your speaking out more plainly.' I said impatiently. ' How otherwise can I guess what you stand in need of, or assist you in any way, as I have said I will, should it be in my power? '

" Wringing his clasped hands with an evident expression of terror, he suddenly cast a hurried glance before him, and exclaimed mournfully :—

" ' I cannot explain,' and rushed out of the tent."

Whoever this extraordinary person was, or whether the Baron embroidered the incident a trifle, we are unable to state, but to us it seems incredible that any adventurer could be so unhinged, unless indeed, he was in, or approaching, delirium tremens.

*Robert Walter Dubuignon de Talbot.*

Though Dubuignon is shown in Gardiner's list as having served Ranjit Singh in a military capacity, the statement is incorrect, for though both he and Ventura used their united efforts to obtain such, they did not succeed, and Dubuignon set up in business in Lahore as a private merchant.

We have ascertained that he was born in France in 1809, and came to India *viâ* Mauritius in the year 1830. He joined the service of Begum Sumru and was given a battalion, and command of her personal bodyguard. In 1834 Ventura was on leave in India, and stayed for a time at Sardhana, where he met Dubuignon, who had married the sister of Anna Moses, Ventura's Armenian wife.

Resigning the Begum's employment, Dubuignon returned to Lahore with Ventura, who had promised to obtain him service under Ranjit Singh, but this failed, for Ranjit Singh's suspicions did not permit him to employ men so closely related. Dubuignon remained in Lahore until after the death of Sher Singh, carrying on his avocation of shawl merchant, and exporter of Kashmir goods, during the whole of this time, with the exception of a short period in 1839, when he was employed by the newly established Indus Flotilla Company. After leaving Lahore in 1843, he went to Calcutta, but eventually returned to Ludhiana, where he again set up in business until 1868, when he died and was buried in the cemetery at Ludhiana, where the monument set up over him gives his name as that at the head of our article.

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*Bianchi.*

Bianchi was one of the few men employed by Ranjit Singh in a purely civil capacity. According to the Punjab Records, he had been some years in India before visiting Lahore, chiefly in Assam and Bihar, where he

had been employed as an engineer on indigo and tea plantations.

He came to Lahore with Ventura and Dubuignon in 1835, and we find by the Khalsa pay-rolls that he was employed as an engineer on a salary of Rs. 9 per day in April, 1835. There is nothing more concerning him in the Records, but fortunately, Major McGregor has included Bianchi amongst those mentioned by him* :—

"Signor Bianchi visited Lahore in search of employment, and was requested to construct a road from Ventura's house to the fort; which he did. So highly was the Maharajah pleased with the result of his labours that he told him to make out an estimate for one which would extend around the city and fort of Lahore, a distance of several miles. On presenting his estimate, to the poor Italian's amazement, instead of Rs. 25,000, the Maharajah offered him Rs. 3,000. Here the affair dropped, and Signor Bianchi, like the rest of them, embraced the first opportunity of quitting the Punjab, which he did without taking formal leave of the Maharajah."

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### *Colonel Francois Henri Mouton.*

Born in the year 1804, Mouton joined the French army as a volunteer in 1822, and served as such until 1826, when he was appointed sub-lieutenant in the Royal bodyguard. He served with this until 1830, when he was promoted lieutenant in the Spahis, or native cavalry of the African army of France. In 1835 he was promoted captain, and in 1838 transferred to the unemployed half-pay list.

There being no prospect of further active employment in the French army at the moment, he applied to Ventura, then on leave in France, who promised to exercise his influence in procuring Mouton an appointment in the Khalsa army, if he accompanied him to the Punjab. The moment of Mouton's arrival was opportune, for the cavalry under

* McGregor's History of the Sikhs, Volume II, page 261.

Allard was in process of reconstruction, and Mouton was appointed to the command of the Cuirassiers on a salary of Rs. 800 per month.

In 1839 he returned to Lahore with his brigade, and later accompanied Ventura to the operaions in the Mandi and Kulu hills, though what cavalry were able to do in such a district does not seem very clear, unless they were acting as dismounted troops. In any case, Ventura's troops were left behind when the General went to Lahore in January, 1841, and by February the disaffection had spread to Mandi, its first victim being Foulkes. After the atrocious murder of that unfortunate officer, the participators invaded Mouton's camp, and demanded his surrender. Some of the men were willing to give him up, but others, inspired by the entreaties of Mouton's wife, who was with him, rallied to her aid, drove off the invaders, and rescued their commander.

We have not been able to ascertain whether this heroic lady* was a Frenchwoman or not, but as there is no mention in the report of Mouton's arrival of his wife's being with him, we may assume that like so many of the female connections of the adventurers she was a Kashmiri Mussulman. In any case, she managed to persuade the regiment to escort her husband and herself to Lahore, though probably the most forcible reason for their consenting was the desire to escape from the uncongenial climate in the hills, and to share in the plunder and increased pay obtainable at Lahore. Having arrived safely the men received a substantial reward for their fidelity, but in order to keep them out of mischief, were sent on to Peshawar where they remained until the assassination of Sher Singh.

As with the others, Mouton either resigned or went on leave, directly after the Maharajah's murder, returning to India in 1844, accompanied by two other Frenchmen, Chevalier Bartoluni and M. Serize, aspirants for

* She was French, and had come out with him in 1838.

service with the Khalsa army. On arrival at Ferozepur, through which, instead of Ludhiana, all visitors to the Punjab were now required to pass, the three men were refused employment. The other two returned to France, but Mouton, who was determined to pass into the Punjab, only went as far as Bahawalpur, from whence he managed to reach Lahore.

He remained there without employment until September, 1845, when he was re-engaged by Raja Tej Singh as a military adviser in general, and in that capacity was present at the opening battles of the second Sikh War. He and the Spaniard, Hurbons were jointly responsible for the entrenchments at Ferozepur, about which contemporary opinions differed considerably, for whilst some authorities spoke of them as excellent and formidable, others characterised them as beneath contempt. However, the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief is worth recording :—

" Notwithstanding the formidable calibre of our guns, mortars, howitzers, etc., and the admirable way in which they were served, it would have been visionary to expect that they would have silenced the fire of 70 pieces behind well constructed batteries of earth, planks, and fascines, or dislodge troops covered by redoubts and epaulements within a double line of trenches."

However, no Commander-in-Chief would be likely to minimise the obstacles the troops under his command had had to deal with, and we are inclined to believe that the fortifications at Ferozepur were not quite so formidable as he represents, especially as Major McGregor remarks concerning Sobraon* :—

" Tej Singh, by all accounts, maintained his confidence in the strength of his position when thus attacked; and his French officer, M. Mouton, is said to have assured him that it was utterly impossible for the British to make an entrance. Compared with Ferozeshah, the works at Sobraon were fortifications, in the construction of which no labour had been spared; the utmost ingenuity of the Sikhs

* McGregor's History of the Sikhs, page 159, Volume II.

and their European advisers were exerted to render this their last stronghold impregnable, and so the Frenchmen believed it to be."

The strength of the entrenchments is apparent from the fact that the storming cost 1,100 casualties, and that the battle of Sobraon was ranked as one of the stiffest amongst the many stiff battles of the Punjab wars. Mouton managed to escape unharmed, and made his way to Lahore, where he was found when the British occupied the city, and was by them deported to France in July, 1846.

Curiously enough, he had been on leave during the whole of his employment with the Khalsa army, and on return to France was reinstated in the French active list with the rank of Colonel, and the command of a regiment of Algerian cavalry. The Legion of Honour was also bestowed upon him, probably as a reward for his services with the Khalsa, for the French were very proud of their officers in that service. Later, Mouton served as a staff officer in the Crimean War, and retiring in the year 1865, died at Algiers in 1876.

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*Hurbons.*

Hurbons was said to have previously served in the Spanish army, and to have been attracted to the Punjab by the reports current in Europe of the high pay and great prospects for military adventurers with the Khalsa army. In any case, on his arrival in 1842, he did not secure any higher appointment than that of a Company of Beldars, or so-called sappers and miners, whose duty was to dig trenches in time of war, for the fighting soldier considered it beneath his dignity to handle spade or pickaxe.

Hurbons was present at the second siege of Lahore Fort, and is said to have been a brave man, and the first over the walls at the escalade. He served with the Khalsa army until after the 1st Sikh war, less the few months during which Pundit Julla had dispensed with the

services of the Europeans. When the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej, Hurbons accompanied them as assistant to Mouton and together they designed and carried out the execution of the entrenchments at Ferozeshah and Sobraon, previously mentioned.*

We know personally nothing of Hurbons, except the solitary mention by Sir Harry Smith, who speaks of him as " a Spanish engineer by name Hurbons, a low-bred man, but clever, acute and persevering." Hurbons was deported to Europe with Mouton.

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### *La Font* (1).

There are two different persons bearing this name who figure alternately as captains or colonels, but judging by their pay they were practically captains or majors, though commanding battalions.

The circumstances attending the entry of the person now under review show how jealously the British watched the entrance of any capable officer into the Khalsa service. La Font, who had previously served with the French Army, interviewed Allard when the General was on leave in France, and was assured by him that service in Lahore was obtainable. Under the assumption that ingress to the Punjab was unrestricted, he came out to Bombay, and presented himself at Delhi in December, 1837, having meanwhile found that British permission to cross the Sutlej was absolutely necessary.

He was kept hanging about at Delhi for some time, no answer being returned to his first application, but eventually he was directed to state his intentions and wishes in writing, for information of the Governor-General in India. This he declined to do, alleging that as Ranjit Singh was an independent prince, and himself not a British subject, the matter concerned themselves only, and then making his way to Bahawalpur, he passed into the Punjab, and secured employment from Ranjit Singh

* Cunningham's History of the Sikhs (Garrett), pages 310-11.

on quite favourable terms. Lieut. Mackeson, of the Political Department, was then in Lahore, and having reported La Font's arrival and entertainment to the Government of India, a considerable outcry was the result from the outraged dignitaries at Simla.

Mackeson was directed to use his utmost influence to have the appointment cancelled, and a long letter, full of complaints in verbose language was sent to Ranjit Singh, informing him that the British Government viewed with the utmost suspicion the resort and entertainment of such persons to, and at, his Court, and demanded that La Font be instantly dismissed. A similar letter, equally objectionable in contents, was sent to General Allard, reproaching him for what the Government was pleased to call his disingenuous conduct in inviting such persons to Lahore, and securing military service for them.

Quite rightfully, neither Ranjit Singh nor Allard replied to these peremptory epistles, but Mackeson persuaded La Font to return to Delhi and seek formal permission, which was granted. When the Khalsa contingent arrived at Peshawar, La Font was attached to the personal staff of Colonel Wade, Political Officer with the contingent, and in that capacity was present at the forcing of the Khyber, and specially commended for excellent service and gallant conduct. He remained at Peshawar in command of one of Avitabile's battalions, during 1841 and 1842, escaping the indignities and outrages inflicted upon some of the other officers, both European and Indian. Possibly, like Van Cortlandt and some of the other French officers, he saw the futility of interference, and by so doing, saved, if not his dignity, at least his life

Presently, the battalion returned to Lahore, without orders, being eager to share in the good things going, taking their *leader* with them. How they behaved there is best shown by the following extract from Dr. Atkinson :—

"*August, 1843.*—Regiment La Font does just what it likes. They were paraded in front of the barracks just near Ventura's house, preparatory to being marched off to the citadel (about two miles away) for parade and the Maharajah's inspection. As soon as ordered to march, they all broke loose, each taking his own course, running or walking, as he pleased, and dragging or carrying his musket in like manner. At night each came back in the same manner. On inquiring why such conduct was tolerated, I was informed that at the present time and crisis, temporising was the only method of averting an outbreak."

In September, 1843, La Font went to France on leave, returning to Lahore the following year, when failing to secure reinstatement, he returned to France.

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### *La Font* (2).

According to the Khalsa Records, this officer joined in April, 1838, as a battalion commander on a pay of Rs. 270 a month, eventually increased to Rs. 800, and the command of two battalions. For a time he commanded one of Avitabile's battalions, but later was transferred to Ventura's division, served in the Kulu and Mandi hills, and returned to Lahore with the General in January, 1841. He then returned to Avitabile's brigade, and served until Avitabile's departure from Peshawar, when, according to the list of Europeans of 1843, La Font resigned and returned to France with the General. It should be understood that these were two distinct persons. For a time we were under the impression that they were identical, but an examination of the Records of pay and service showed that though both were employed at the same time, they were different persons.

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### *Henri Francois Stanislaus De La Roche De Rouget.*

Judging by an inquiry made by a brother in Mauritius in 1852, this person appears to have been born in that island. Yet, according to the MS. Records, De La Roche, before joining the Khalsa service, was a clerk

in the British Customs office at Panipat. But he must have had previous military service, for he was engaged in the year 1838, which seems to have been a flush year for adventurers, as a Colonel of Cavalry, on a salary of Rs. 500 per month.

It seems quite possible that he had been an officer with the forces of Begum Sumru, thrown out of employment when, after her death, the Sardhana forces were disbanded and dispersed by the British.

In any case, the list of 1841 shows De La Roche as commanding the Sher Cavalry regiment, and Quarter-master-General of the Army, which latter post would seem to have been a self-conferred one, for we have not been able to trace anything like a regular staff with the Khalsa army at any period. Sohan Lal mentions that De La Roche was occasionally employed to settle boundary disputes, a duty for which the better class European officers were occasionally selected, they being considered just and impartial.

He was also present at the siege of Lahore Fort in 1841, and according to Lawrence, had prepared a mine to blow up the Fort when it was discovered that secret passages connecting the Fort with the Badshahi Mosque magazine were also full of powder, so the project was abandoned. Miles Irving records that*—

"De La Roche, when intoxicated with liquor, died from the effects of a fall from his horse at night, in December. 1842, and was buried by his faithful Mussammat Fateh Buksh, near the Tower of Mauj Darya at Lahore."

The grave has now disappeared.

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### *Dr. Benet.*

Besides Honigberger, Ranjit Singh employed two other surgeons, or physicians, one a Frenchman, the

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* Monumental Inscriptions in the Punjab, page 2.

NOTE.—De La Roche was often employed on engineering duties.

subject of the present notice, and the other an Englishman, whom we shall notice later. Benet arrived at Lahore in 1838, the moment being propitious, for Ranjit Singh has just failed to secure the services of the surgeon to Begum Sumru, which he particularly desired, his reason being that as the Doctor had kept the old lady alive for many years beyond the allotted span, he would be able to perform the same service for Ranjit Singh.

The negotiations fell through, and Benet being on the spot was engaged as personal physician to the Maharajah, and Surgeon-General to the Khalsa army. As the duties of this post were extremely light in an army which possessed neither hospital nor medical equipment, and left the wounded to shift for themselves, Benet may be considered as Court physician only. His pay was Rs. 1,000 per month, and he must have made considerable amounts by private practice. We find nothing concerning him in the Khalsa Records, until after he had left Lahore, and are indebted to Barr for a casual mention, which shows that Benet enjoyed high favour with Ranjit Singh, and attended him in his last illness. This latter, however, we do not think is correct.

After Ranjit Singh's death Benet settled at Ludhiana as a private practitioner, and from the Records we may judge him to have been as fiery tempered a person as his countryman, Argoud. A summons had been served upon him by the chuprassi at Ludhiana Court, and on ascertaining what it really was, Benet proceeded to assault the man with the butt end of a loaded pistol. Naturally, the pistol exploded, and the bullet passing under the Doctor's arm, killed an unfortunate dhobi, who was standing behind him.

The Resident placed the Doctor in confinement, but being puzzled how to act in the case of a French subject, referred the matter to the Government at Delhi. For some three months the Doctor remained in jail, whilst the references travelled backwards and forwards, but finally on his

offering to recompense the family of the dhobi, and settle a small annuity upon them, he was released.

Being still at Ludhiana when the British advanced into the Punjab, Benet accepted temporary employment as a surgeon, and unfortunately for himself, was taken prisoner at the action at Baddowal. In company with several others, he was sent to Lahore, and placed under charge of Potter and Honigberger, the latter of whom, though mentioning Benet, does not refer to the fact of his having been previously in the Khalsa service. After the battle of Sobraon, the prisoners were released, and Benet returned to his practice at Ludhiana. We have not been able to trace anything further concerning him, but as he is not buried at Ludhiana, we may presume that he returned to France.

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### *Dr. Harvey.*

Harvey entered the Khalsa service a year before Ranjit Singh's death as a medical officer to the army on a salary of Rs. 900 a month. As with Benet, his army duties must have been very light, as also were his duties with Ranjit Singh, for though liking to have European doctors about him, the Maharajah would not take any of their medicines, or follow their advice. We have not been able to ascertain when Harvey left the service, but he must have done so shortly after the Maharajah's death.

## CHAPTER XVI

CERRON — ST. AMAND — FITZROY — JEAN ALEXIS DE FACIEU — HENRI JOSEPH DE FACIEU — GHIT GILLOT OR QUILETTE — GERVAIS — MARTINDALE — LAWRENCE GOMEZ ALLARD OR GOMES LAWRENCE — ALLARD ALVARINE OR AMORAN — LAIRDEE — BARLOW — BOYLE — DE L'UST OR DEPUIS — HENRY STAFFORD — JOHN HOWELL — ALEXANDER *alias* MAHOMED SIDIQ — METUI — STORMER OR STORR — HEST — WEIR — SHERIFF — FARRIS — BATTICE OR BATES — FENDRID — GUTHRIE — GILLMORE — JOHN GOULD — ANTONE, MAHER, RAMSAY AND BAKER.

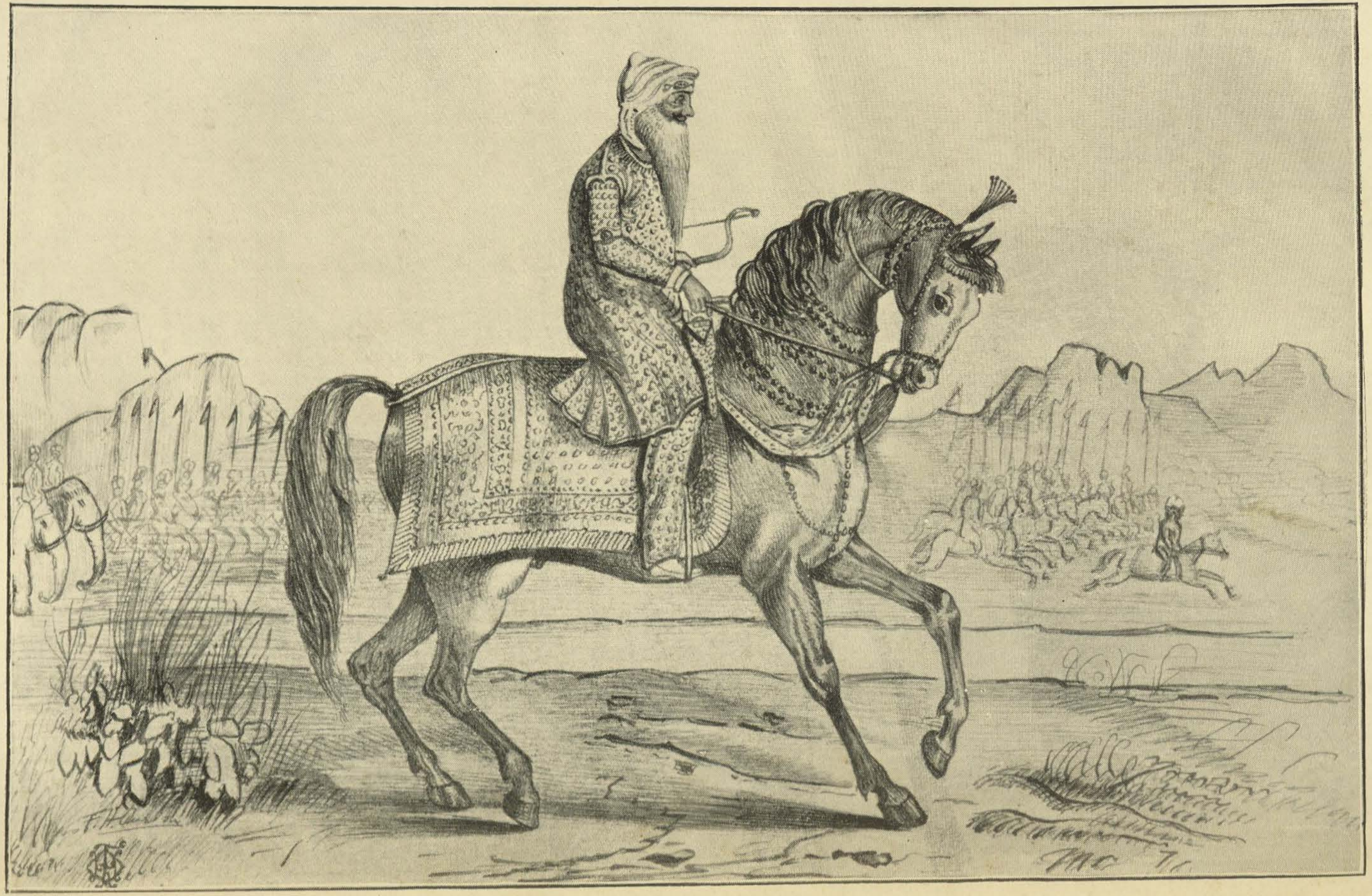
### *Cerron.*

A mention of this individual in the Punjab Records shows that he arrived at Lahore in 1838, through Multan. with the intention of seeking employment with Ranjit Singh.

Not succeeding in obtaining employment, although he hung about the Courts of Lahore for some months, Cerron, like so many others in like case, decided to go to Kabul for the same purpose, but whilst on the journey up to that place, encountered Sir Alexander Burnes, then returning with Masson from his unsuccessful mission to Kabul. It so happened that the moment was auspicious, for a man being needed to take up the appointment just vacated by Masson, it was offered to Cerron, who accepting, was engaged on a monthly salary of Rs. 250 with an immediate advance of Rs. 1,000. Wood, who accompanied Burnes, thus describes their encounter with Cerron, and his opinion of that gentleman* :—

" From Kabul we marched on to Jalalabad. During the few days of our stay at the former place, we had made the acquaintance of a young Frenchman of pleasing manners and gentlemanly address. He gave out that he

* Wood's Journey to the Oxus, pages 423-24.



MAHARAJAH RANJIT SINGH ON HORSEBACK, 1830.

had travelled amongst the Kaffirs of the Hindu Kush, and was anxious to make another journey through their country. I had long felt a desire to visit these people, and agreed to accompany him, provided I had Captain Burnes' permission.

" For this I applied, and arranged with the Frenchman that I would remain at Jalalabad till an answer arrived, where, if favourable, he was to join me. In the interim I ordered presents for the journey to the value of about £10; these consisting of looking-glasses, beads, needles, thread, etc. At parting I requested a sight of my new acquaintance's journal, but to this he demurred, and in lieu of it presented me with what he called extracts.

" This was not so satisfactory a document; however, the strange adventures he professed to have met with amongst the Kaffirs were so plausibly told that I had no suspicion of his falsehood, until the day we entered Jalalabad, when Gulab Hosain asked me whether I believed the Frenchman's story.

" 'Yes, certainly,' was my reply.

" On which the Munshi exclaimed:

" 'Tuman durrogh! (It's all a lie)', and brought forward the discharged servant of the Frenchman, who satisfactorily proved that his master had never been nearer Kafiristan than Jalalabad, nor had he ever experienced the strange stories he was in the habit of relating as his own adventures.

" This man had introduced himself to me as a sailor, and amongst other stories of the sea, related at great length, the incidents of a cruise in the Pacific, in a French vessel commanded by an Englishman. Some time afterwards I discovered that for all he knew of nautical matters he was indebted to Mr. Masson, from whom he had borrowed a work entitled, 'A Whaling Voyage in the Pacific.' "

Sir Richard Temple mentions Cerron as a person who had experienced many weird adventures, but the above quotation will show that, like those of another person who successfully imposed upon Sir Richard, Cerron's adventures existed in his own imagination or were pirated from those of others.

Cerron proceeded to Kabul, and there is considerable correspondence concerning his proceedings at that place, for his honesty seems to have been on a par with his veracity. There exists considerable acrimonious correspondence between Cerron and Dr. Lord, concerning money matters, for it appears that he was in the habit of taking large advances from the native bankers at Kabul, who knowing his connection with the British Government, advanced him whatever money he required. Thus we find Dr. Lord dishonouring a draft for Rs. 6,000 which Cerron alleged he had spent in obtaining information by bribing such persons as were in a position to afford it. However, the money was later paid by the Government of India.

His position at Kabul became risky, for had Dost Mahomed suspected him to have been a spy of the British, his shrift would have been exceedingly short, and the fact that he managed to evade suspicion is attributed to the ability and cunning with which Dr. Lord credited him. Lord characterised Cerron as not only able and cunning, but a very zealous person, though he qualifies this tribute by endorsing his letters to the effect that information given by Cerron could not always be depended upon. There are quite a number of letters from Cerron, still surviving, all written in French on odd scraps of paper, and the writer excuses the scrappy nature of the correspondence by the fact that his letters had to be written at odd times and under conditions of great secrecy.

After the occupation of Kabul, Cerron was deputed on a mission to the Nawab of Bajour, and a report, dated December, 1839, mentions that he had just died of cholera at Bajour.

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*St. Amand.*

This person, who gave himself out as a portrait painter, gave considerable trouble to both the British and the Sikh Durbar Government during the years 1845-46,

and was eventually deported from the Punjab after the conclusion of the 1st Sikh War. In January, 1845, he arrived at Ferozepur, in company with Van Cortlandt, and requested permission to proceed to Lahore. Naturally, in view of the disturbed condition of the country, and the fact that St. Amand's object was military service, this was refused.

St. Amand then proceeded to Ludhiana, from whence he managed to cross the Sutlej, disguised as an Afghan horse dealer, and succeeded in getting to Lahore. He was refused military employment, and then passed on to Kashmir, where he represented himself to Gulab Singh as an Agent of the British Government. He was at first accepted as such, and managed to bleed Gulab Singh pretty considerably, until presently, some unguarded remark caused suspicion, and Gulab Singh referred to the Durbar, who passed on his suspicions to the English. The Political Agent, Major Broadfoot, was very angry about the matter, and requested Gulab Singh to send St. Amand to Lahore under an armed escort. But, by skilfully utilising the existing ill-feeling between the Durbar and Gulab Singh, St. Amand managed to remain in Kashmir until after the 1st Sikh War, when he was returned to Lahore, and from thence deported.

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*Fitzroy.*

This man appears in Gardiner's list of the Europeans who served Ranjit Singh, but all we know of him is the following :—

" *5th April, 1835.*—John Fitzroy, an East Indian, who was formerly in the East India Company's military service, has been employed by Ranjit Singh."

Whence he came, and when he departed, we know not, nor as he does not appear to have been of any importance, does it matter much.

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*Jean Alexis de Facieu.*

Vicomte Alexis de Facieu was the son of Francis Joseph de Facieu de Pepegron, and the descendant of an

old French family. He was originally a Colonel in the French service, and came to India about 1840. He was employed as a Colonel of Cuirassiers in the Khalsa army, and from the Khalsa Records, we find that in 1842 his salary was Rs. 800 per month, which, curiously enough, was divided with his son, who drew Rs. 300 for commanding another Regiment of Dragoons.

He does not appear to have seen any active service with the Khalsa army, which he left after the murder of Sher Singh, and proceeded to Ferozepur with Court. He died at Ferozepur in December, 1843, and being an officer of rank in the French army and the Khalsa, was accorded a full military funeral by the British authorities at that station.

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*Henri Joseph de Facieu.*

The acquittance rolls of October, 1843, show this individual as the son of the former, and commanding the Sher Regiment of Dragoons, in Ventura's brigade. He left the Punjab immediately after Sher Singh's death, and after the death of his own father, went on to Allahabad and there set up in business. The Mutiny of 1857 ruined his business, so he went to Burma, and obtained military employment with Mindoon Min, the King of Burma. After the latter's death, he served King Theebaw, and was a General of Cavalry, or its equivalent, in the Burma army when the British conquered and annexed the country in the year 1888.

He then retired to Rangoon, and lived there as a pensioner of the British Government until 1893, dying, the very last of the long line of European adventurers of whom we have records from the early 17th century.

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*Ghit Gillot or Quilette.*

These names all apply to the same man, whose real name is the last one, as we find from a mention by Von Orlich, who met the French officers in Ranjit Singh's

service in 1843. The remark against his name in the list of Europeans states that :—

" M. Gillot (Quilette) was formerly in the French navy, and is now an instructor of artillery."

### *Gervais.*

This name appears in Gardiner's list, but we have not been able to discover anything concerning him, unless he is identical with one or other of the unnamed Frenchmen who occasionally appear in the Records.

### *Martindale.*

Also appears in Gardiner's list, as serving Ranjit Singh, but as a matter of fact he never did so. He was the son of General Martindale, an officer who figured prominently in the Gurkha War of 1814, his mother being an Indian woman. He served for many years with Skinner's Horse, and on being pensioned off, settled in Lahore, apparently with the idea of obtaining employment with the Khalsa army, an ambition which, however, was never realised.

### *Lawrence Gomez Allard*
### *or*
### *Gomez Lawrence.*

There appears to have been three separate persons owning, or having assumed, the name of Allard. First, the General himself, secondly, the person above named, who would, from his name, appear to have been a Portuguese, or Goanese, and a third, also known as Amoran or Alverine. Gomez Allard appears in the list of Europeans of 1842 under the name of George Lawrence, and is shown as having entered the service in 1821. From the salary paid to him, which never reached more than Rs. 90, we assume him to have been a person of mixed blood.

He served the Khalsa until 1844, when with the other Europeans he was dismissed for a period, to be taken back later into the Khalsa service, as Adjutant of one of John Holmes' batallions. After the Punjab War, he was taken into the British service as Adjutant of one of the Police battalions formed from Sikhs disbanded from the Khalsa service, and served with that until 1862, when he was pensioned and given a grant of land by the Government of the Punjab amounting to 200 acres. He appears to have been of very small account.

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*Allard, Alvarine, or Amoran.*

These three names appear either in Gardiner's list or in that of Fakir Qamr-ud-Din. But we are of opinion that they are all variations of the one name, all incorrect, for his real name appears to have been Halloran, an obscure Irishman of whom we find absolutely no mention except in a list kindly sent us by Sir Edward Maclagan, which identifies Alvarine with Halloran. Fakir Qamr-ud-Din states that a person named Alvarine was killed in Hazara at the same time as Kanara, but of this we have no corroboration. Had there been another European killed there Captain Abbott would certainly have mentioned it. As the Syud wrote fifty years later he must have confused his memories.

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*Lairdee.*

This man was one of the few Europeans in the Khalsa service who was known to have fought against us in the Sikh Wars. Our first mention of him is in the Records which mention that such a person has been discovered in Kashmir serving Gulab Singh. Subsequent enquiries resulted in the following* :—

" *15th January, 1845.*—It has been ascertained that this man's name is Lairdee, and that he deserted from Major Delafosse's battery in 1842. The Durbar have sent him to Lahore, and are apparently reserving him there

* Punjab Records, Book No. 135, Letter No. 7.

in anticipation of his being demanded. But in the present state of variable affairs and weakness in the Government at Lahore any demand for him might arrive at a moment when the Durbar might be unwilling or afraid to comply with it, and a refusal would be a slight, for, though deserters have been recovered, it is not a matter of right, or a favour we could reciprocate. I have therefore sent the descriptive roll of the man without any demand for him."

Major McGregor closes the known career of Lairdee in the following* :—

"Potter was not the only European soldier in the Sikh force. A man named Lairdie, under the assumed name of Sultan Mahomed, and who had deserted from Captain Delafosse's troop of artillery in 1842 or 1843, was amongst the Sikhs, and a man named Boyle, a deserter from the First European Light Infantry, likewise. The artillerymen must have been of infinite service in training the Sikhs as gunners, and the conduct of the latter showed that their instructors had not bestowed their labour in vain."

According to an ancient Sergeant-major of the Bengal Artillery from whom in the early nineties we gathered much concerning the deserter class in the Khalsa army (much, unfortunately forgotten), Lairdee escaped until Sobraon where he was taken and killed by the troops before any effort by the Political Officer to save him could be made, if indeed he would have desired to do so.

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*Barlow.*

Though this man's name appears in Gardiner's list there is nothing concerning him elsewhere. But the informant above mentioned to whom we showed Gardiner's book, when it was published in 1895, identified him with the person below mentioned by Major Mackinnon†.

"Another Englishman in the Sikh ranks at Ferozeshah fell during the storm of the works by the British

* McGregor's History of the Sikhs, Volume II, page 141.

† Mackinnon's Military Adventures, Volume II, page 183.

Infantry crying aloud : ' Spare me lads, I am an Englishman and belonged to the old 44th '. He was bayoneted at once.''

Another account of the same incident by an old Sepoy runs :—

*" I was taken prisoner in the retreat from Kabul, and being taken back there was sold as a slave for Rs. 250. There were also a number of Europeans for sale; they were intended as instructors to the Afghan army and being supplied with some skins of Shiraz wine appeared not to lament their fate. Some belonged to the Bengal Artillery, and some to the 44th Foot.''

The Subedar was later ransomed but none of the Europeans was ever recovered. Most of them probably died, and the fate of the others is mentioned elsewhere. Our informant previously quoted told us that Barlow who was one of them managed to escape, and get safe to Jumrood from whence he entered the Sikh service. Of this the Subedar thus wrote† :—

" At the Battle of Ferozeshah I saw a European about to bayonet a wounded Sikh. The Sikhs usually kept very quiet when wounded but to my surprise this man begged for water, and also called out in English. The soldier then pulled off his turban, and kicked him several times, and then ran him through the body with his bayonet. Several other soldiers then kicked the body and ran him through with their bayonets.''

We may mention that the European soldiers mentioned by the Subedar were distinct from those taken by Akhbar Khan, being private booty. The former were later ransomed.

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*Boyle.*

This man is mentioned in the account of Lairdee. What became of him we cannot say. Probably like the others he was killed by the British troops either knowingly or not.

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* Sepoy to Subedar.

† *Ibid*, page 126.

*De L'Ust or Depuis.*

This man appears in the list of Europeans as Depuis. He first figures in the list of Europeans employed by the Khalsa in the year 1842 first as an artillery instructor and later as commandant of a battalion. After being dismissed from the Khalsa service he set up as a dancing master and teacher of French in Simla. Apparently he had been invited to India by General Ventura, for there are several letters from him to the Government of India invoking their aid to procure his arrears of pay either from the General or the Durbar Government. Whether they were ever paid we cannot say, but we doubt it very much, having in mind the chaotic conditions prevaining in the Punjab at the time.

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*Henry Stafford.*

This man joined Suchet Singh in 1838 as a battalion commander on a salary of Rs. 150, which was later raised to Rs. 350 per month. He is variously shown in the lists as an American, or an Englishman, who had deserted from the British service. We know nothing more of him.

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*Captain John Howell.*

Whence and from where John Howell came, prior to his appearance at the Battle of Meeanee, we have not been able to ascertain. According to his own admission he formerly belonged to the R. A., but this is, we think, a mistake, or a misstatement, for the British Royal Artillery was not stationed in India during the 19th century until after the Indian Mutiny. He could not have been a deserter from the Bengal Horse Artillery, and as Dr. Anderson speaks of him as " gentlemanly, and well educated," we may assume that he was an officer in the British services who had found his way to India. Our first authentic report of him is in an extract as under :—

" At the Battle of Meeanee, in February, 1843, an Englishman who had been fighting in the ranks of the forces

of the Amir of Sindh as commandant of their artillery, was taken prisoner.

"He was brought before the A. Q. M. G., Lieut. MacMurdo, and, on being asked from where and whence he came, he replied: 'My name is John Howell; I am a Welshman, and formerly served in the Royal Artillery, and am now in command of the artillery of the Amirs of Sindh.' On being told that he would be shot as a traitor to his country, he said: 'That is not so; I have not fired upon my countrymen, and you must admit that our shots went over your heads (which was quite true)' ".

Lieut. MacMurdo reported the case to Sir Charles Napier, who regretfully said: "Well, he must be shot," but after some time he yielded to the representations of Lieut. MacMurdo, who told him that Howell had been in danger of his life for refusing to fight against the British, saying: "Very well then, let him get away quietly." Howell was permitted to escape.

Some years afterwards Lieut. MacMurdo was Q. M. G. of the forces of the army under Sir Charles Napier's command, which was sent to assist in the first Punjab War, but arrived too late. On passing through Bahawalpur, he called on the Wazir of Bahawalpur, and to his great surprise found him to be John Howell in native dress.

After his release by the British, or rather their connivance at his escape, Howell entered the service of the Nawab of Bahawalpur. Whatever his real position may have been with the Nawab, he was employed as supply officer to the Bahawalpur contingent sent to assist Herbert Edwardes against the rebels under Dewan Mul Raj at Multan.

He was now known as Captain Howell, and was spoken of by several persons who met him as soldierly and efficient. But with all this there must have been something "fishy" about him, for his application to the British Government for a medal for services at Multan was endorsed by John Lawrence as not to be forwarded until Mr. Howell had explained his conduct whilst in the Bahawalpur service.

Apparently he returned to Bahawalpur and died there in 1865.

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*Alexander*
alias
*Mahomed Sidiq.*

This man does not appear in the Khalsa pay-rolls or Punjab Records, but does in the list of Europeans furnished from 1841 to 1844, which shows his as a battalion commander with John Holmes, on a salary of Rs. 150 per month. The remark placed against his name which runs thus, is significant :—

" Mr. Alexander was formerly employed in the service of Shah Shuja, by whom he was made a Mahomedan."

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*Metui.*

Our only record of this person is from Syed Qamr-ud-Din's letter to Sir Edward Maclagan, in reply to a request for information concerning the Europeans in Ranjit Singh's service. The Syed, who died in 1904, was a contemporary and Sir Edward Maclagan suggests that the name was really Minchin, which is quite possible, for there were a number of European deserters reported as missing between 1836 and 1839 of whom no record has been traced. The Syed remarks :—

" Captain Metui was a captain in some regiment. He had a bungalow constructed in Ghatiwali lane, inside Bhati Gate, Lahore. He had a woman of Kashmir by whom he had a daughter. The captain and his daughter both died at Lahore. It is not known where they were buried. Perhaps one of the graves in the Gol Bagh is his."

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*Stormer*
or
*Storr.*

Stormer is shown in the lists of Europeans as a deserter from the British, who commanded a battalion belonging to Suchet Singh, from an early period. The

Syed also states that Storr or Stormer was taken into the British service after the second Sikh War, but "left for home after serving the British Government for a short period." He married one of John Holmes' daughters, and in mentioning the fact, the Syed gives John Holmes an allowance of four wives.

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*Hest.*

The Syed remarks that "Hest was a colonel in some regiment. It is not known where he fell or was buried."

Hest appears in Gardiner's list as having been killed in the streets of Lahore, but this is incorrect, for had such an occurrence as the murder of a European taken place in Lahore before the anarchy, it would have been reported by the newswriter. A chance mention in the Records has enabled us to identify Hest with the person mentioned by Dr. Kennedy*.

"My friend, Major B, drank a bottle of beer, and another of Madeira with a Greek, the Commandant of the Hyderabad Artillery; and ascertained that his liquor was better than his ordnance, and that, had they been fired, the result would have been disastrous, added to which the redoubtable cannoneer admitted, as his heart warmed with liquor and love of the English, and joy at the honour of drinking with an English field officer, that he eked out his stipend of Rs. 75 per month by inserting some 200 paper men upon his muster-roll, and that, through the goodness of God, he was sole muster-master."

As the pay of an artilleryman was Rs. 6 per month, Hest's roguery added the not inconsiderable sum of Rs. 1,200 to his monthly income. What eventually became of him we have not been able to trace, and there is no mention of him as with the Bahawalpur contingent which served with Edwardes and Cortlandt.

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*Weir.*

According to Syed Qamr-ud-Din "Mr. Weir occupied a subordinate position in the army. He had a woman of

* Kennedy's Army of the Indus.

Kashmir with him, and resided near the Bhati Gate. He and his wife died at Lahore; their burial ground is not known." There are descendants of this man still living in Lahore.

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*Sheriff.*

Of this man we have only a mention by Syed Qamr-ud-Din, who noted that he "was an Engineer, and met his death by a fall from a horse. It is not known where he was buried."

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*Farris.*

This man and those following are mentioned by Syed Qamr-ud-Din, and this is all that is forthcoming concerning them.

"Mr. Farris was employed in the gunpowder factory. Died at Lahore, and it is not known where he was buried."

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*Battice or Bates.*

"Was employed in manufacturing gunpowder and saltpetre. Died at Lahore, and it is not known where he was buried."

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*Fendrid.*

"Served for some time and then left the country."

---

*Guthrie.*

"Served for some time and then left the country."

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*Gillmore.*

"Mr. Gillmore was a Colonel in some regiment, and was married to a Kashmiri woman, by whom he had children. Both he and his wife died at Lahore, and one of the two graves of Europeans in the Gol Bagh near the Kutchery, at Lahore, may be his."

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*John Gould.*

John Gould was brother-in-law to Colonel Van Cortlandt, and commanded a battalion in the Khalsa service from 1834 to 1842, in which year he died and was buried at Ferozepur.

*Antone, Maher, John Ramsay and George Baker.*

These men were all Eurasian musicians. The first served as bandmaster to Ranjit Singh, and entered his service after the death of Begum Sumru; the others were drum-majors or musicians to the different battalions.

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So far as we have been able to ascertain, this completes the list of the adventurers who served with Ranjit Singh and others during the periods our researches embrace. There may have been many more, of whom we can find no trace, and the difficulty of obtaining more details concerning those we know of, as well as the unknown ones, is accounted for by the fact that they were either borne on the pay-rolls of the feudatory nobles, or served with their battalions. Of these battalions, there were twenty-five divided as under :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mian Jowahir Singh | ... | 2 battalions. |
| Raja Gulab Singh | ... | 8 ,, |
| Raja Hira Singh | ... | 4 ,, |
| Raja Suchet Singh | ... | 2 ,, |
| Raja Dhian Singh | ... | 2 ,, |
| Mian Labh Singh | ... | 2 ,, |
| Rai Kesri Singh | ... | 1 battalion. |
| Lehna Singh, Majithia | ... | 2 battalions. |
| Ahluwalia | ... | 2 ,, |
| | | 25 |

To Syed Qamr-ud-Din we are indebted for the following details concerning the adventurers. Writing to Sir Edward Maclagan in 1904, he relates :—

" Sir,

.................There is no one of the Durbaris of Maharajah Ranjit Singh at present alive in Lahore who could throw any light on the subject. I, therefore, give an account of the European gentlemen in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh so far as my memory goes. My father and uncle held very high positions in the time of Maharajah Ranjit Singh and almost all the Durbaris, whether European or native, used to pay visits to them

on business. Besides, the officers of the regiments transferred to Lahore on relief used to come to the house of my brother, Fakir Syed Chiragh-ud-Din, in the summer season to take a bath in the *nan* (spring) in the house, which contained icy cold water, and which kept the adjoining houses cool. These officers used to visit the house generally at 11 o'clock, after the Durbar was over. I, therefore, had a personal knowledge of these gentlemen, and knew their names.

"The costume of the high European officers in those days consisted of as under: A cap of Persian velvet of red or green, having lace on its border, the crown of which was puckered up in the centre, on which was fixed a tassel of gold threads, which hung over it, and looked beautiful. A cloak of Kashmir shawl in the winter season and of white cloth in the summer. Under the cloak they wore waistcoat and shirt, and their pantaloons were loose, so as to enable them to sit on the carpet with ease. General Avitabile, when Governor of Peshawar, used to wear a cap made of golden thread, and a turban of Kashmir shawl...... There being no carriages (*buggis*) in those days, these gentlemen used to go out in a tam-jam (a sort of vehicle having seats facing each other, and carried by eight coolies)."

Regarding the graves of the many who are known to have died in the Khalsa service, there are but few now known, that of Oms, which was situated just outside the Shahdara mausoleum enclosure, has almost entirely disappeared. There are two others in the Gol Bagh, one a humble brick tomb, and the other a more pretentious one in the Mussulman fashion. There are no inscriptions on either, but we are fairly certain that one tomb is that of Gillmore, and the other of Weir or Bates.

Allard lies buried somewhere near his daughter, and the grave of De La Roche has long since disappeared, it having been built over. Gardiner is buried at Sialkot, and John Holmes in Bannu; but where the others lie no one knows or has forgotten.

# APPENDIX I.

## RANJIT SINGH AND THE RISE OF THE SIKH NATION.

Through, and with, Ranjit Singh, did the Sikhs become a powerful and ruling nation. After his controlling genius had been removed by death, the Sikhs fell back into chaos and anarchy, and were ultimately absorbed, inevitably and unavoidably, into the British Indian Empire.

Before his rise to power, the Sikhs were a tumultuous, turbulent, and loosely connected theocracy of semi-independent clans (misls) who, though they might combine for defence or aggression, or a religious object, were otherwise usually engaged in internecine strife, with their compatriots or the Mussalman states or tribes interspersed with, or neighbouring them.

From these heterogeneous, eternally striving and jealous elements, Ranjit Singh, by his sheer personality and genius, built up a state, and buttressed it by an army created from these discordant and disorderly elements, which he disciplined on a military system hitherto entirely foreign to their traditional warlike methods.

Ranjit Singh was born about the year 1780, his father being Maha Singh, Chief of the Sukerchakia Misl, one of the smallest into which the Sikh theocracy had finally been resolved. Maha Singh died when his son was about eight years old, and until he had attained the age of 17, the Regency was carried out by Mai Malwaine, his mother, and Sada Kour, his mother-in-law, to whose daughter Ranjit had been married at the age of eight.

Ranjit Singh's own mother had been killed by his father, on account of an intrigue in which she had been detected, and at the age of 17, the son followed the example by slaying with his own hand, his mother, whose character had long been questionable, when he detected her with the Hindu dewan. After her death, Ranjit Singh was not yet free from feminine influence, for Sada Kour was a masterful woman who was not only such, but an able and wise counsellor, and occasionally an active assistant in the battle-field. Their first conquest were the Chattas, a tribe of Mussalmans whose chief Ranjit Singh slew with his own hands, subsequently absorbing his estates and followers.

The next exploit was the taking of Lahore Fort and city in 1798, which was done by a mixture of boldness, strategy, and cunning, qualities in which he excelled. This success aroused the

enmity of the other clans, who combined against him, but were defeated at Batala, some forty miles from Lahore, where Ranjit Singh ably seconded by Sada Kour, surprised and almost annihilated them. He next invaded the hill district of Jammu, and having conquered this, restored it on payment of a ransom, the acknowledgment of suzerainty, and the payment of an annual tribute. He next annexed the districts of Sialkot and Dilawagarh, which were restored to their owners on similar terms.

He then proceeded to proclaim himself Maharaja of the Punjab, and to strike coin bearing his superscription: steps, which though they might seem arrogant, were but a prescience of coming events. Bit by bit he extended his possessions, Akalgarh and Nurpur fell to him in 1801, and Daska, Chiniot, the Jullundur Doab, and Kasur a year later. Kasur was restored to its Pathan owners, on the usual terms, but the other states were added to his personal dominion. He next took the city of Amritsar, from the control of the Bhangi misl, after a stiff fight, and added this most important commercial city and religious capital of the Punjab to his dominion.

The next conquest was Jhang, and in 1805 he besieged Multan, from which he was bought off with a ransom of Rs. 75,000. The same year Ranjit Singh, for the first time, came into contact with the British, of whose military power he had, till then, heard only from men who had once served in its ranks or fled before the arms of the British.

The Maharatta army, under Jaswant Rao, Holkar, flying before Lord Lake, had crossed into the Punjab, and penetrated as far as Amritsar, followed hard by Lord Lake, who, crossing the Beas, encamped at Jullundur some thirty miles below Amritsar, to await events, before advancing, for it was quite possible that Ranjit Singh might be induced to ally himself with the Maharattas. The troops belonging to Jaswant Rao numbered about 15,000, mostly the battalions, or remnants of them, who had been trained by the European adventurers, then so numerous with Indian princes.

Having received military aid from some of the Sikh chiefs of the Cis-Sutlej States, Holkar had come to believe that he might receive the same from Ranjit Singh, to whom he had previously sent messengers with an appeal for aid, and substantial presents. But Ranjit would not commit himself to any but the vaguest of promises, until quite certain how the land lay, so he visited Holkar, and after a minute inspection of his troops passed on to Lord

Lake's camp in disguise, and spent some days in secretly examining the British battalions, and the artillery, both Europeans and sepoys.

This visit convinced him of the futility of opposing such troops as he saw at Jullundur, so on his return to Amritsar, he summoned the confederacy, of which he was now the acknowledged head, and with their consent, advised Holkar to accept the British terms and, whether he did so or not, to depart at once from the Punjab. The visit to Lake's camp, and the sight of the British army, convinced him that here was a type of soldier far more effective than the great mob of disorderly horsemen he had hitherto led ; so he set about raising two battalions, on a similiar model, manning them with deserters from the British, or the disbanded soldiers of the Maharatta armies, and officering them from the same sources.

Year by year he extended his army, until at the end he possessed 34 battalions of infantry, nine regiments of so-called regular cavalry, and about 370 guns of various sorts, independent of the 300 camel guns attached to the Ghorcharra force. These battalions were his own, and independent of the 25 or so belonging to the feudatory princes.

As with his military force, he added year by year to his dominions. In 1806 Ludhiana, Dibalpore, Pathankot, and Jesrota yielded either to force or arms, cunning, strategy, or faithlessness, all of which he practised with equal success at various times. In 1807 he built Fort Gobindgarh on the European principle at Amritsar, the intention being to overawe that city, then, as it is still, the headquarters of the Akalis, or warrior priests, the most turbulent of all the Sikhs. The fort was also his main treasury.

In 1809, becoming overconfident with his increasing strength, he crossed the Sutlej, and invaded the Cis-Sutlej States, though he had been previously warned that they were under British protection, and that serious consequences would certainly follow any such aggression. Thinking the latter only idle words, he continued his plundering career, and it was not until a large British force was assembled and orders given to Colonel Ochterlony to drive him back into the Punjab that Ranjit Singh retreated to his own territory.

Not satisfied with the evacuation of the British-protected states, Colonel Ochterlony forced Ranjit Singh to sign a treaty, in which he promised to confine himself henceforth to the right bank of the Sutlej, and ceded Ludhiana, which now became the

headquarters of the British force kept there to guard against future aggressions. For the purpose of concluding and signing this treaty Mr. Theophilus Metcalfe, a Civil Servant, was deputed to meet Ranjit Singh in Amritsar, and in addition, to endeavour to engage him in a defensive alliance against the French, then supposed to be threatening India through Central Asia. He was accompanied by an escort of Mussalman soldiers, and the visit coinciding with the time of the Mohurram, the religious ceremonies carried out by the escort aroused the ire of the Akalis.

They assembled near the camp, and whilst the procession was parading through it, made a sudden attack upon the unarmed and unsuspecting sepoys, and even penetrated to the tent of the European officer in charge, who was slightly wounded, but though taken aback for a moment, he and the sepoys promptly rallied, and drove out the Akalis with many casualties, themselves suffering none. It has been stated that this incident was the cause of Ranjit Singh forming regular battalions, as he was so impressed with the rallying and steadiness of the sepoys, but this is incorrect, for he even then possessed several battalions, whom Mr. Metcalfe saw, though he was not favourably impressed with them.

But it did cause Ranjit Singh to tighten up his system and improve the drill and discipline of his men, for which purpose he not only engaged all the *ex*-British sepoys who offered themselves, but enticed over a number of native officers and havildars, by promises of high pay and rank. A few Europeans were also tempted, but of these we can only find faint traces of two.

Still continuing to extend his dominions, he added the Kangra valley, Wazirabad, Attock, Kotla, and several other districts to them, and in 1819 took Multan. In 1820 he invaded Kashmir, but with small results, and the same year added the Derajat, Rawalpindi and a few more frontier states to his dominions. He took Peshawar, but restored it to the Barakzai sirdars, on conditions of suzerainty and tribute, which tenure existed till 1834, when he resumed it in full.

In 1831 a meeting between Lord Bentinck and Ranjit Singh took place at Rupar, and another between himself and the British Commander-in-Chief, in March, 1837, when Sir Harry Fane attended the wedding of Nau Nihal Singh, the heir-apparent, at Ajnala, near Lahore. Both these functions were attended by reviews of the troops on both sides, and spectacles of extreme magnificence.

Having decided to restore Shah Shujah to the throne of Afghanistan, the British Government sought the aid of Ranjit Singh, and early in 1838 Sir William MacNaghten, accompanied by an

imposing retinue, both civil and military, interviewed Ranjit Singh at Adinanagar, and finally arranged the tri-partite treaty, before referred to, by which the two parties bound themselves to assist Shah Shujah, Ranjit Singh receiving some substantial inducements.

The last meeting between the Maharajah and the British took place at Ferozepore in November, 1838, when the Maharajah was invited to meet Lord Auckland, the Governor-General of India, and to review the army assembled for the invasion of Afghanistan. Here occurred an incident which was looked upon by the Sikhs as an "unpropitious omen," for when invited to inspect some cannon intended as a present for him, Ranjit Singh stumbled over a pile of shot and fell flat on his face before the mouths of the British cannon.

This was almost his last public function, for many years of the most revolting debauchery and excessive drinking of trebly distilled spirit had undermined his constitution. He had previously been warned by several attacks of partial paralysis, but having recovered from these, had become careless. He now became almost completely paralysed and speechless, and on the 29th June, 1839, passed away, after having distributed a million pounds in charity and religious donations, and bequeathed the Koh-i-Noor to a temple at Benares. However, the latter injunction was not carried out.

To the last he took a keen interest in all that was passing, and managed to make clear, by signs and facial contortions, that he was still monarch and ruler, until a few hours before his death. He could neither read nor write, and his character is thus (omitting the description of his vices) summed up by Major MacGregor, who knew him very well:—

"In debate Ranjit Singh appears at once to grasp the whole subject, and his reasoning powers are of the highest order. As the absolute monarch of many states formerly owning separate rulers, and all reduced by his own efforts, the manner in which he retains these conquests entire, displays his endless resources and energy, even more than his conquests in battle. In appearance he is small in stature, and disfigured with smallpox, from which he has lost an eye. In his youth he was an excellent horseman, and well skilled in all military feats; first in the field, and ever the last to retreat. Inured to hardships, even now he prefers a tent to his palace, and is the plainest dressed man in all his court."

With his faults discounted by his surroundings and upbringing, Ranjit Singh emerges a great man. His vices were but those of the whole of northern India and Afghanistan, and by the natives accepted as neither disgusting nor disgraceful. Drunkenness was a vice more common to Europeans than to Indians, and in this he was no worse than many of the Englishmen with whom he came in contact. His cunning and suspicion were in great measure due to illiteracy, for able men who can neither read nor write are intensely suspicious of education in others, which they fear will be used to overreach them.

His greatness is shown by the fact that almost unaided he rose to be the chief of a nation he himself had formed from a congeries of discordant clans. Though this fell to pieces when his cementing influence was removed, its creation was a great tribute to his genius, ambition, energy, and ability. But it may be that he died at the crucial moment, for the signs were evident that his influence was waning, and his kingdom moving towards disintegration.

# APPENDIX II

## A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE ANARCHY IN THE PUNJAB

## 1839—1845

To enable the reader to understand the ramifications of plot, counterplot, treachery and intrigue before and during this anarchy, it will be necessary to give a brief account of the principal persons taking part therein, their claims to hold, or share in the rule, or the advantages they would derive from connection, or sympathy with the principal personages.

The succession to the throne of Ranjit Singh was complicated by the sons born to, or attributed to, and acknowledged tacitly or otherwise by him, who were numerous. The morality of the Sikh sect was astonishingly lax, with high as with low, a surprising feature being that the ownership of sons was considered more important than their legitimacy. Gardiner, in his notes appended to Smyth's "Reigning Family of the Punjab," gives several instances of sons born to a man's wife, during the prolonged absence of the husband being accepted by him on his return, even though they could not possibly have been his, if not without question, at least with complaisance, and even satisfaction.

He gives one case of a Sikh soldier, absent for a period of eight years, who on his return found himself presented with four sons, the eldest of whom was but six years old. On asking from whence they came, the wife calmly informed him that they were his, to which he replied that though they were a welcome addition to the family, she had better not attempt to convince others of his parentage. Another case is that of a man absent for four years, who found two sons on his return, the eldest of whom was less than three years old. He not only accepted them, but gave the real father Rs. 40 to renounce his claim to the family.

Henry Lawrence in an official report remarks that the Sikh princes, nobles, and sirdars spent their time in the brothels of the city, leaving their wives to console themselves with the servants, or chance lovers. Such being the custom, it is not at all surprising to find the ruler accepting as his sons babes whom he knew perfectly well had not a shadow of claim to that relationship. Taking these sons in detail.

The first and only legitimate one was Kharak Singh, born in 1802, to Raj Kour, the second wife. Kharak Singh was married to Chand Kour in the year 1812, and of this marriage was issue Nau Nihal Singh, born in February, 1821, who in turn married the daughter of the Ahluwalia chief in 1837. Nau Nihal Singh left no issue, but a posthumous son was still-born, terminating the legitimate line. Next claiming descent from Ranjit Singh were Sher Singh and Tara Singh, alleged twin sons of Mehtab Kour, daughter of Sada Kour. Having long been childless, Mehtab Kour had been neglected by her husband, and in consequence the masterful mother-in-law's influence was declining.

Being a person of decision and thoroughness, the old lady took steps to remedy the defect, by producing a couple of boys whom she alleged had been fathered by Ranjit Singh, advantage being taken of the Maharajah's absence on the frontier to have the children born ; but, one of these, Sher Singh, had been bought from a dhobi, and the other, Tara Singh, from the wife of a Sikh carpenter. Though under no allusions as to the parentage, Ranjit Singh's vanity was tickled at being the father of twins, so he accepted them as his own. Sher Singh ultimately became Maharajah, but of Tara Singh we hear nothing more.

Seven years later the substitution trick was again played by Daya Kour and Rattan Kour, other wives, who put forward Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh as twins, and Multana Singh. To add to these complications, another reputed son was brought forward in 1841, a set-off to the power of Sher Singh, this being Dulip Singh, born in February, 1837, to Rani Jindan, a girl whom Ranjit Singh was supposed to have married in 1835. Though born some years before Ranjit Singh's death, he was never tacitly, or otherwise, acknowledged by the Maharajah, who knew that the real father was a water-carrier attached to the zenana, for from a very early age Rani Jindan was notorious, even amongst Sikh women. We have therefore as claimants to royal honours :—

Kharak Singh, legitimate; Nau Nihal Singh, his son, and the alleged still-born son of the latter.

Sher Singh and Tara Singh, Kashmira Singh, Peshora Singh and Multana Singh, all spurious.

Lastly, comes Dulip Singh, who ultimately became the last Maharajah of the Punjab.

Then we add to this multitude of claimants the Dogra brothers, Gulab Singh, Suchet Singh, and Dhian Singh, and the son of the latter, Hira Singh, all intriguing to obtain or retain

place, and power, and to do so, to destroy all of Ranjit Singh's descendants, real or reputed, in order to clear the way for Hira Singh.

Again add the two Ranis, Chand Kour and Jindan Kour, both as ambitious as immoral, their numerous relatives and lovers, the aspirants to the Wazirat, and the heads of the important Sikh misls, all of whom aspired to supreme power, and we have the most perfect ingredients for a true witches' cauldron.

The centre of the tragic events commencing soon after the death of Ranjit Singh was the old fort of Lahore, built in Moghul times. It is a queer old place, from whose far-flung ramparts rise line upon line of lofty buildings, some embosoming superlative gems of architecture; side by side with, or overplanted by, the grotesque creations, or daubs, of the rude and iconoclastic Sikh. Even now the panelled walls of the outer palace show remains of the delicate and artistic ornamentations, created by professors of an art long vanished, side by side with the grotesque paintings of the Hindu mythology, sufficient of the former surviving to enable us to picture the splendour with which these ancient walls glowed beneath the summer sun.

Here, after Ranjit Singh's death, Kharak Singh, a man of feeble intellect, caused by excessive indulgence in drink, drugs, and immoral vices, took up his abode with Chait Singh, who soon gained such an ascendancy over the feeble-minded Rajah as to render him the merest of puppets. As described in Gardiner's memoir, Chait Singh was murdered on the 8th October, 1839, Kharak Singh was deposed, and it is said, poisoned by his son a year later, whilst Nau Nihal Singh himself was killed on the 5th November, 1840, it is said, accidentally, when returning from his father's pyre.

Deposition, death, accident, or intent having within 18 months eliminated two Maharajahs, Chand Kour was, by the ascendant Sindhanwalla faction, installed as Regent, on behalf of the expected posthumous son of Nau Nihal Singh. Dhian Singh, then Wazir, stood out for the claim of Sher Singh, affirming that the Sikh sect of warriors would never accept a female Regent. However, he was voted down, and apparently acquiescing in the resolution, withdrew to Jammu, to wait his opportunity, whilst on his advice, Sher Singh retired to his jaghir at Batala, about 70 miles from Lahore.

To the ordinary observer, the policy of the Dogras would appear to have been parricidal, as well as fratricidal, for Gulab

Singh championed Chand Kour, and was supported in this by Hira Singh. But it was only apparently so, for though on opposite sides, the Dogras were not of them, but only adhered the better to bend them to their interest, or betray if occasion served, and opportunity required, for in all their tortuous intrigues the common Dogra interest was undeviatingly pursued.

Dhian Singh left agents provided with ample funds, who were charged to insinuate themselves into, and gain the support of the troops for Sher Singh, whilst the latter, who was esteemed by the principal European officers, managed to persuade them to abstain from active participation in the incoming strife, a promise which all were willing to give, as relieving them from the fear of reprisals. This accounts for what has puzzled some historians, who have commented on the absence of the principal European officers from the siege of Lahore Fort. Ventura, returning to report his success in the Mandi and Kulu hills, arrived at Batala early in January, and had a long interview with Sher Singh.

He then passed on to Lahore, where he was asked by the Rani to assume command in the event of operations against Sher Singh —a request to which he evaded a direct reply. On the morning of the 13th January, Sher Singh with three hundred horsemen unexpectedly arrived at Avitabile's house on the Budh-ka-Awa, and took possession of it. The situation was ideal, for the mound commanded the adjacent cantonments and the road from Amritsar. Henceforth, this house became the hatching-place of all the subversive and murderous plots of the anarchy, and the headquarters of the panches, or army councils who ruled the soldiers and dictated their policy. It has now been demolished (1917).

To the west was situated the cantonment of Naulakha, to the east that of Begumpura (Moghulpura), and to the south-east that of Mian Mir. Court's brigade, which took the most prominent part in the subsequent operations, was stationed at Begumpura, and this body, together with the others who subsequently joined it, made up a strength of about 25,000 infantry and cavalry, with one hundred guns.

Immediately after his arrival, the leading European officers present tendered their respects to Sher Singh, and the adherence of the Sikh officers was secured by the natural method. But for some reason, probably an intentional one, the arch-conspirator, Dhian Singh, did not appear, and as his function was to act as security for, or provide the funds, for bribery, his absence was ominous, and appeared to be calamitous. However, Jawala Singh, an aspirant for the Wazirat, came forward and persuaded Sher

Singh to let him supply Dhian Singh's place, assuring him that the absence was intentional, the Wazir having either betrayed the cause or withdrawn his support.

The offer was gladly accepted, for time was short, and money all important. Immediately Jawala Singh interviewed the principals, and by the distribution of two lakhs in ready cash, and the promise of an increase of pay from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 per month secured the enthusiastic support of the troops, who signified their adherence by firing 100 guns, the booming of which announced to the alarmed citizens of Lahore that tragic events were impending.

Meanwhile, Gulab Singh, seconded by Hira Singh, also took action. His first step was to parade his personal troops, comprising some battalions of hillmen, and ten guns, the latter under Gardiner, and move out to attack Sher Singh, whom he wished to keep out of Lahore until the arrival of Dhian Singh, for it was important to the Dogra interests that they should appear to be the leading spirits on both sides. If Sher Singh succeeded without Dhian Singh's aid, he might afterwards disdain it, whilst Jawala Singh, who had been marked by the brothers as dangerous, might also succeed to the Wazirat, thus keeping out the most able of the Dogra brothers from a very important post.

However, he had barely moved off when the salute announcing the adhesion of the troops to Sher Singh was heard, so he retired into the fort, and garrisoning it with his own men, closed the gates, placing guns behind each. He then assembled the troops already in the fort, and selecting such as he thought trustworthy, disarmed the remainder, comprising some 1,200 Sikhs of the regular army, who were imprisoned in the vaults, under the citadel, and overawed by guns placed at the only two doorways leading therefrom.

He then visited the Badshahi Mosque, at the further end of the Hazuri Bagh Garden, which was utilized as the main magazine of the troops at Lahore, and guarded by two battalions of Sikhs of the regular army. Amongst these he distributed money and promises, and then passed around the city walls, acting in like manner with the guards at every gate and bastion, obtaining from all an oath of fidelity on the appropriate symbol of their religion (many were Mussalmans). It is said that he distributed about three lakhs of rupees, none of which, however, was his own money, it having been taken from the state treasure stored in the Moti Masjid.

Finally, on returning to the fort, he assembled the garrison and presented each man with a douceur of four months' pay, and a further promise of an equal amount, should the defence prove successful.

As Gulab Singh quitted the city by the northern gate, Sher Singh entered it by the western, and passing round to each post in his turn, suborned the garrisons of these and the Badshahi Mosque by still heavier bribes. It is said that he expended some four lakhs of rupees, so as the troops had received about £70,000 amongst them, they may well have been said to have done very well.

Sher Singh having no use for mounted troops in the attack on the fort, sent them into the city, with the double purpose of finding them occupation and ensuring the fidelity of the garrison, who would just as easily have sold Sher Singh back to Gulab Singh as they had betrayed Gulab Singh to him. No sooner had they entered the city than they commenced to loot, and being joined by the garrison of the walls, the city became during the night a saturnalia of murder, plunder, fire and outrage. The principal bazars were plundered, the shops of the merchants and traders were broken open and such as objected, or resisted, were thrown into the flames of their burning houses.

A few hours before dawn the tumult ceased, and until dawn the city lay quiet, whilst the satiated soldiery snatched a brief repose. Meanwhile, over the grey old walls of the fort brooded the still and ominous silence, which precedes an expected attack at dawn. Just as the faint streaks showed in the eastern skies, the watchers on the wall caught a faint hum from the east, which soon resolved itself into the rumble of artillery and the tramp of innumerable feet, as Sher Singh's army, supplemented by Akalis and the combined rascality of the city poured along the road from the Budh-ka-Awa.

Dimly through the dust and faint light of the dawn showed the glare of innumerable torches, reflected from the bared bayonets and swords of the Khalsa soldiery. Presently the leading file of the oncoming host caught the loom of the walls of the fort, and burst out into deafening cries of "Wah Guruji ki Fateh ! " which were answered by the host converging on the fort from the opposite sides of the city and the Anarkali cantonment. No sound came from the fort, nor was a shot fired, even whilst the vociferous host debouched on to the glacis, and open spaces surrounding the fort, nor even while they arranged their artillery, now swollen to 150 guns, on all sides of it.

Only the occasional gleam of matchlock, or port-fire through the loop-holes, or embrasures betrayed the existence of armed men within. But though not apparent, all was prepared, and each loop-hole was manned by three soldiers, one of whom was to fire, whilst the others passed on loaded muskets. The gates on the eastern and western sides had been barricaded by overturned bullock carts without, and within by guns loaded to the muzzle with musket bullets and slugs.

Still, silence reigned over the fort. So puzzled at this contemptuous indifference Sher Singh directed his guns to fire a round of blank. Still no answer ; whereupon the drums beat a parley, in response to which Gulab Singh appeared on the ramparts above the Hazuri Gate, and inquired the terms. In response to the demand for unconditional surrender, he returned the answer that Rajput honour forbade a bloodless one, and stepped down to avoid the volley which replied.

Then, the besieging artillery opened fire at the ramparts and the foot of the walls, answered very effectually by the matchlocks of the garrison, and as the gunners were in the open, less than a hundred yards away, they fell fast. Within a couple of hours the guns stood silent, the gunners and cattle, who by a criminal carelessness or indifference had not been withdrawn, piled dead in heaps beside and around them. The last battery to be abandoned was one of heavy guns, which delayed its inevitable fate by a despicable ruse, for gathering some 200 women from within the city, they disposed them around the guns.

For a time the defenders forbore to fire on the women, till presently finding that the walls were crumbling under the fire of these sixty-pounders, they opened fire, but were so skilful in marksmanship that only a few women were killed, whilst the whole of the gunners met the fate they richly deserved.

By noon the bombardment had ceased. Around the fort stood the circle of silent guns, around which it is said that no less than 2,000 dead men lay, accompanied by some thousand cattle. So they stood till nightfall, when the besiegers stole forward and removed the guns, though losing more men in so doing. The guns were then formed into batteries within the city edge, and for two more days the attack continued, though on two sides only. But with no more success, for though practicable breaches were made, and parties sent forward to storm, all melted away before the withering fire of the besieged.

For two days longer the siege continued, until on the 17th January Sher Singh directed the cessation of attack, whilst

escorted by Ventura, van Cortlandt, and some other European officers, he entered the city in state, and was proclaimed ruler of the Punjab at the Mosque of Wazir Khan. The day after, Dhian Singh arrived from Jammu, and the intention of delaying the surrender of the fort until his arrival having been accomplished, Gulab Singh opened negotiations, and finally surrendered on honourable terms.

That evening the garrison stole out. Each of 500 sowars carried a bag of 200 gold mohurs, and the tumbrils and ammunition carts, 16 in number, were loaded up with treasure. It was said that even the guns were crammed full of it. A great number of valuable Kashmir shawls and a quantity of the Court jewels were also taken.

By now the Khalsa troops had found out the depletion of the treasury, and made up their mind to attack, but on finding that Gulab Singh had been reinforced by 6,000 men from Jammu, they decided not to do so. However, a few days later, taking no chances he departed with his troops to Jammu.

Meanwhile, the stench from the bodies lying exposed around the fort was so great that a pestilence being feared, orders were given to burn the dead, and both animals and men were cast on to the funeral pyres made from wood torn down from the houses in the city. Even the wounded who had lived through these dreadful days, were thrown alive on to the pile by their barbarous comrades, who first robbed and stripped them. Then the troops turned their attention to the city, and all those whose hands betrayed evidence of a clerkly calling were ruthlessly murdered in revenge for the peculations made from the pay of the troops by themselves for their relations.

The spirit of ferment, revolt, and murder spread throughout, even to Kashmir, Mandi and Kulu, and from henceforth the soldiery ruled absolute. After a time they settled down to a chronic state of indiscipline, tempered by sporadic mutinies, until the establishment of the panches, or soldiers' councils, substituted bargaining with the abler few to that with the multitude.

The license of the army spread throughout the dominion ; bands of armed robbers, and the ever turbulent Akalis robbed and roamed everywhere. Local feuds were revived, and settled by armed strife, each side hiring as many robbers as it could afford. The army, who in ordinary times acted as police and enforced the collection of revenue, declined to do either, or anything but take

part in any enterprise or strife promising immediate profit. Robbery, assassination, and murder existed everywhere, and the will of the strongest became the law.

At the Court the Maharajah and his satellites abandoned themselves to license and debauchery, until presently Sher Singh awoke to the necessity of guarding what he had won, and then a series of plots, intrigues, and assassinations were commenced. Behind all these lurked the sinister figures of the Dogra brothers, human spiders who spun an ever-increasing web of triple and even quadruple treachery, the tangled meshes of which ultimately involved and destroyed three of them.

The first to be sent to the unknown bourn was Jawala Singh, whose activities had marked him out as dangerous to the Dogras. The safest of all measures was death, and to compass this Dhian Singh instilled suspicion and distrust into Sher Singh's mind, and this becoming evident, Jawala Singh left the fort. He was summoned to return, but refused to do so, whereupon an overwhelming force was sent against him, and himself captured. On account of his influence and importance, open murder was not expedient, so he was confined in a dungeon at Sheikhupura, and there beaten and starved to death.

The next to be removed was Chand Kour, the widow of Kharak Singh, whose wealth and influence had rendered her dangerous to the reigning prince, while she had also been engaged in intrigues with the British, to whom she had deputed Ajit Singh with an offer of a six-anna share in the revenues of the Punjab, and an acknowledgment of suzerainty in return for her being placed on the throne by a British force.

But the disastrous result of interference in Afghanistan had left the Government of India poor both in money and reputation, though rich in an experience which made them very chary of similar enterprises. The negotiations leaked out, and also wrathful at her scornful rejection of his offer of marriage, Sher Singh bribed two of her female attendants to kill her, which they did by dropping a stone on her head as she lay in her sunken bath. But the punishment of the women was not delayed, for being arrested by a sentry as they were leaving the house, on account of their suspicious demeanour, their tongues were cut out, and hands and ears cut off. They were then put across the Ravi, where they speedily died.

Though perfectly aware that the Sindhanwallas had been the instruments of Chand Kour's intrigues, Sher Singh, at Dhian

Singh's intercession, forgave them, and took them into favour. Of course, Dhian Singh's motives were ulterior, the brothers being only placed there to remove Sher Singh at a favourable opportunity. But they were just as cunning as the Dogra Rajah, and realised that once they had ceased to be useful to him, their own end would be swift. Accordingly, they decided to remove both.

Firstly, Sher Singh was induced to give sanction to the murder of Dhian Singh, by representing that Dhian Singh had promised the Sindhanwallas a jaghir of sixty lakhs, for his removal, and other inducements, such as the Regency and Wazirat. They produced documents, whether forged or not we cannot say, bearing Dhian Singh's signature, and incensed at this, Sher Singh signed another document authorising the murder of Dhian Singh. Armed with this, they presented themselves to Dhian Singh, and obtained his sanction to the murder of Sher Singh, and a promise of personal immunity from anything they might do.

The next step was to bribe the fort garrison, who were mostly Dhian Singh's own men, and to introduce amongst them a number of their own adherents. All being ready, they now applied to Sher Singh for him to make the annual inspection of their jaghirdari troops, at which Dhian Singh, in his capacity as Wazir, was also to be present to take the muster. This obtained, on the morning of the 15th September, 1842, the Sindhanwallas arrived at the Shah Bilawal, the Garden House of Sher Singh, a few miles out from Lahore.

They brought with them 150 horsemen and 300 footmen, of whom the former were disposed to surround the enclosure, whilst the latter were marched inside to the house, having previously been instructed as to their duties. Ajit Singh, carrying a double-barrelled gun, loaded with slugs, then entered the room, in which Sher Singh sat, and offered the gun for inspection. But, as the Maharajah put out his hand to receive it, both barrels were fired into his chest, whilst the soldiers fired through the doors and windows, and killed the remainder.

Meanwhile Lehna Singh had slaughtered Partab Singh, the twelve-year old son of the Maharajah, and then setting both heads on spears, the brothers and their escort set out for Lahore Fort. About half-way they met Dhian Singh, with only a few attendants, and showing him the heads as token that the work had been well done, they requested him to return to the fort, and concert further measures, to which, having no alternative in the face of a superior force, he consented.

As they entered the fort, all but one of Dhian Singh's attendants was excluded by the guard, and surrounded by Ajit Singh's followers, Dhian Singh, side by side with Ajit Singh, trooped up on to the fort parade-ground. Here they halted, whilst Ajit Singh took Dhian Singh's hand, and asked him a question as to the Regency, not receiving a favourable answer, he crooked his finger as a signal to the man behind the Wazir, whereupon a blunderbuss, also charged with slugs was discharged into his back, killing him instantly. The sole follower, who attempted to make a resistance, was also cut down, and both were thrown into the rubbish heap at the fort gun-foundry.

Ajit Singh's action was precipitate, for it had been his brother's intention to make Dhian Singh a prisoner and under some pretext inveigle Hira Singh and Suchet Singh into the fort and dispose of all three together. However, making the best of the matter, he sent out a messenger with an escort of 500 men, to request them to come in for a conference. But, before the messenger arrived, the news of the triple murder had reached the Budh-ka-Awa, and taking immediate action, Suchet Singh had sent out to summon the troops from the adjacent cantonments.

The messenger turned back, and on reaching the fort, preparations were made for defence. Meanwhile, the panches had assembled at Avitabile's house, and were addressed by Hira Singh. Casting his sword and turban before them, he called upon them as representatives of the soldiers to avenge the murders. He denounced the intrigues of the Sindhanwallas, whom he asserted were ready to hand over the Punjab to the British, and reduce the Khalsa soldier to a mere labourer for the benefit of the "white faces." He asserted that their religion would be prohibited, their privileges curtailed, and other arguments to a like effect.

To all of this the panches listened unmoved, until seeing that other inducements were necessary, he changed his tactics ; he appealed to their cupidity. Each man was promised a pair of gold bracelets, a bonus of a month's pay, and an increase of pay with the plunder of the fort, and the Sindhanwallas thrown in.

This was sufficient ; and only waiting to have the promise confirmed on the Granth, the panches sped down to carry the glad news. Immediately the drums beat to arms, and such was the haste of the soldiers that they scorned the suggestion of waiting till the morn, or even for the evening meal, then preparing. Cooking pots were overturned, fires extinguished, and the haste

of the laggards stimulated so by musket butts and sword flats that within an hour 40,000 men were on their way to the fort.

Meanwhile, the Sindhanwallas had made every effort to bribe the garrison of the city and the Hazuri Bagh, but though these took the money and promised support, they intended to do nothing, so that the Sindhanwallas could depend only on their own adherents in the fort. Just after sunset, Hira Singh's force, with about 100 guns, mostly of small calibre, arrived at Lahore, occupied the city, and commenced the siege of the fort. Throughout the night the continuous throbbing of the drums, the booming of the cannon, and the rattle of musketry kept pace with the tumult in the city, where as before the troops robbed, burnt, and outraged unrestrained.

By next morning, little effect was visible on the fort walls, nor was much more made until Hira Singh offered substantial rewards to the gunners, who, redoubling their efforts by nine of the next day effected a practicable breach, through which the fort was stormed, and the whole of the garrison put to the sword. The heads of Lahna Singh and Ajit Singh, being cut off, were taken to the funeral pyre, whereon sat the women. The head of Ajit Singh was placed in the lap of the principal widow, who had waited two days for it, and then promising to convey the wishes of Hira Singh to his deceased father, she gave the signal for the pile to be lit.

The whole of the fort buildings and the Royal quarters were looted of everything removable, and having done so, the troops turned their attention once more to the city, wherein they plundered for two further days; when satiated, they retired to their cantonments, loaded with plunder. The infant, Dalip Singh, was now proclaimed Maharajah, with Hira Singh as Wazir.

We now enter upon a new act, with fresh principals. Hira Singh, though Wazir, was only nominally so, his every action being supervised and directed by a Pundit named Julla, who shared with Suchet Singh the wavering affections of the Rani Jindan, who, however, favoured Suchet Singh, and only utilised Pundit Julla to further her project of displacing Hira Singh in favour of his uncle. In this plot she was aided by her brother, Jowahir Singh, whose own aim was to clear away both, and himself occupy the Wazirat.

Pundit Julla very soon fathomed the intention, and warning Hira Singh, changed his affection for his uncle to a rancorous hatred. Discovering the changed attitude, Suchet Singh, through

Jowahir Singh, appealed to the troops to depose Hira Singh on the ground of his ill-treatment of the Maharajah and his mother, and elevate himself to the post. Jowahir Singh took advantage of a great review of the troops outside the fort to do so, but having no substantial inducements to offer at the moment, was not only unsuccessful, but abused by Jodha Ram, formerly the dewan of Avitabile, who had now succeeded to the command of Avitabile's brigade. Not content with abuse, Jodha Ram committed the unpardonable offence of striking Jowahir Singh in the face with a shoe, an indiscretion he atoned for in the end by the loss of his nose, ears, and thumb, at the hands of Gardiner.

Jowahir Singh was banished to Amritsar, and Suchet Singh directed to quit Lahore, taking with him his personal troops. We now leave Lahore for a time to relate what was happening elsewhere. Peshora Singh and Kashmira Singh having mustered a force of their own in rebellion, were too dangerous to be left at liberty. They were first apprehended and fined Rs. 20,000, but a fresh pretext being given by their murder of a servant, who had given information to the Durbar, Gulab Singh was directed to bring them in to Lahore as prisoners.

They had taken refuge in their fort at Sialkot, upon which two attempts failed. A third by Gardiner being more successful, the princes were induced to surrender the fort, and were then brought prisoners to Lahore, where they were stripped of everything and turned adrift to join a band of wandering Akalis, with whom we may leave them for a time.

Meanwhile, the troops were squeezing Hira Singh to the utmost, and seized the pretext of his ill-treatment of Ranjit Singh's reputed sons to extract a fine of Rs. 10,000 from him. A further reason for their dislike was that Pundit Julla, realising that the Sikhs were at the bottom of all the trouble, had disbanded several regiments, and replaced them by more docile Poorbeahs and hill-men. He had also in the interests of economy dismissed all the European officers, with the exception of Holmes and Kanara, who being in Hazara, were left alone.

At his wits' end for money with which to pay the troops, and meet the expenses of the Court, Hira Singh and his adviser incurred further unpopularity by collecting heavy arrears of revenue, generally tightening up the system, which as it pressed most heavily on the nobles and sirdars, embittered them also. They conspired to approach the army, with a view of installing Suchet Singh, and for this purpose the panches extracted a substantial

advance. They then approached Hira Singh, and sold the plot to him for a larger bribe, the result being that when Suchet Singh, thinking all was well, came into Lahore, he was first turned out of their cantonments by the troops, and later, at Hira Singh's request, attacked by the troops and murdered.

Once more the two princes, Kashmira Singh and Peshora Singh, appear on the scene, together with the last of the Sindhanwalla brothers, Attar Singh, also an aspirant to the Wazirat. He collected a fairly large force, and attaching it to another under Bawa Bir Singh, a wandering guru, who held control of a well-armed force of 1,500 Akalis and several guns, which, by the accession of Attar Singh and other followers, was brought up to 5,000.

Prompted by Attar Singh, the Bawa gave out that the succession to the throne, and the appointment of ministers, was the prerogative of the gurus, and in pursuance of this policy, proscribed the Dogra rajahs and their adherents as traitors, whom no means should be spared to destroy. Naturally, the news prompted Hira Singh to fresh efforts, so once more the panches were summoned and their support secured by the customary means. The army was then marched against the Bawa, whose forces were engaged near Ferozepore, the result being the defeat of the rebels with the loss of Attar Singh, Kashmira Singh, the Bawa himself, 500 soldiers, and 200 women and children, who were drowned in attempting to escape.

The rich plunder of the Bawa's camp satisfied the troops for a time, and they remained quiescent. Meanwhile, anarchy and confusion reigned elsewhere. Though a certain amount of revenue was collected, very little of it reached the treasury, most being absorbed by the troops and the officials engaged in the collection. Law, or the administration of justice, practically ceased, for the officials not receiving any pay, ceased to attend to their duties. The police duties were also dormant, for most of them had been done by the army, who declined to leave Lahore for fear of losing opportunities.

This scarcity of money seriously damaged Hira Singh's popularity with the troops and the Court officials, and it became necessary to obtain more in order to keep the former pacified. Once more an effort was made to recover the arrears due from the sirdars, and these measures, coupled with Hira Singh's own arrogance, soon made both him and his family, thoroughly unpopular, and accelerated their inevitable fate.

A new lover in the person of Lal Singh, the Brahman treasurer, had been taken up by Rani Jindan, and though this person owed his elevation to Dhian Singh, he disliked the Dogras, and was only too willing to aid in the downfall of Hira Singh, even though he had exchanged turbans with him (a mark of thorough trust). Meanwhile Jowahir Singh had managed to gain the support of a portion of the troops, and especially that of the Akalis, the most turbulent section of the populace.

Matters were thus balanced when Pundit Julla made the mistake of publicly insulting and abusing the Maharajah, the Rani, and Jowahir Singh on the occasion of a public religious function. This angered the troops and Akalis considerably, and when the next day, a review was arranged, Jowahir Singh and Hira Singh's faction almost came to blows. However, the unconvincing result of the quarrel and the sullen attitude of many of his own supporters convinced Hira Singh and the Pundit that they had outstayed their welcome, and should seek safety in speedy flight.

Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 22nd November, 1844, they secretly left Lahore for Jammu, with five elephants loaded with treasure, mostly gold mohurs and rupees. That their departure was timely was notified by the fact that as they left the western gate, the guns of the fort boomed out a salute in honour of the elevation of Jowahir Singh to the Wazirat. The guard at the gate having notified their exit, a great body of horse followed in hot pursuit, and overtook them some miles from Lahore on the other side of the river Ravi.

In vain did Hira Singh cut open his money bags, and scatter *ashrafis* along the road, but the soldiers disdained to stay for these, and sped all the faster to the source of the treasure. The fleeing cavalcade was overtaken and for six miles a running fight continued, which ended in the death of Hira Singh, Julla, and such of the escort as stayed to fight. The heads of the principals were cut off, and set on spear heads, and their bodies piled on to a bullock cart, in which they were conveyed to Lahore and there cast to the dogs and jackals, at the Taxali Gate.

The head of Pundit Julla was paraded through the bazaar, as a peep-show, and a pice (farthing) extracted from every passer-by. Finally, when tired, the bearers threw the head to the jackals. Those of Hira Singh and his principal adherents were made over by the Rani to one of the sirdars, who burned them on the spot where Suchet Singh had been cremated.

The principal tragedians now appearing were Jowahir Singh, Rani Jindan, and her lover, Lal Singh, with Gulab Singh in the back-ground, ever ready to appear when his interest prompted. For their services on this occasion, the troops received a gold bangle each, and the panches a gold necklace, the treasury being ransacked to provide the material. The soldiery were now comparatively wealthy for the anarchy had prevailed during four years, and drained the resources of the country, to their advantage, as whatever faction came into power, owed it to their support and paid liberally for it.

After a time no new trouble transpiring, the troops became restless, so to pacify and employ them, an expedition was undertaken against Gulab Singh, who for some offence had been fined three lakhs of rupees. He had not only evaded payment, but the summons to Lahore, for he knew perfectly well the risk of such a proceeding, so that the need for money being urgent, the troops were sent to collect it. But first a sirdar expressed his willingness to go on in advance, and was permitted to do so on the understanding that if Gulab Singh made over the fine to him, no further proceedings would be taken.

The sirdar was well received, the money was duly paid over to him, and he was despatched to Lahore with a small escort. But, a few miles out from Jammu, he was ambushed, and together with all his men, killed by Gulab Singh's myrmidons, who regained the treasure, with interest in the shape of the sirdar's personal property and the plunder of his men. The news reaching the army, they were infuriated, but Gulab Singh sent a messenger who bought them off for a sum of Rs. 25 per head, in return for which, and promises of more, they promised to oust Jowahir Singh and install the Dogra.

However, on arrival at Lahore this promise was evaded, for meanwhile Jowahir Singh had also paid up, so the result was a stalemate. But, the Rani took advantage of his presence to fine him the sum of Rs. 68 lakhs, this being the value of the property belonging to Hira Singh, Suchet Singh, and Dhian Singh, all of which with the exception of some lakhs left at Ferozepur by Suchet Singh, was considered escheated to the state. He was then permitted to depart ; needless to say the money was never paid in.

To add to political troubles, in April and May, 1845, an outbreak of cholera carried off 20,000 of the civil population of Lahore and Amritsar. The number of soldiers was also great,

for the news-writer records that on May 26th, 1845, 5,000 ownerless muskets were sent into the fort, and with them 320 pounds weight of gold bangles, recovered from the dead bodies. How many more were not recovered may be imagined.

There was now but one of Ranjit Singh's reputed sons still left, Peshora Singh, who was induced by Gulab Singh to go to Lahore and endeavour to stir up the troops against Jowahir Singh. He was permitted to enter the camps, but on being requested to put down the money, had to confess that it was not with him, so the troops contemptuously drove him out with the order that he was not to return without a substantial amount as earnest money. Peshora Singh returned to Sialkot, where he obtained two battalions from Gulab Singh, who, however, deserted him on finding that there was no money forthcoming.

Peshora Singh had better luck at Attock, where he induced a number of Pathans to join him, with their aid managing to intercept Rs. 6 lakhs of treasure being sent up as payment for the troops at Peshawar, and then to take Attock Fort. On this becoming known, a force was sent out from Lahore, but on arrival, finding the fort too strong to take by fair means, they resorted to foul, and by means of forged documents promising immunity and safe conduct, induced Peshora Singh to surrender. He had no sooner done so than they took him prisoner, and confined him in irons in a dungeon beneath the river-level, in which he was strangled by a man sent up from Lahore by Jowahir Singh.

Once more free from danger, the Rani, her paramour, and the Court abandoned themselves to the utmost license. Drunkenness, debauchery in general, and immorality reached heights hardly touched by even Ranjit Singh. The scum of the bazars, the barracks and stables were the favourites of the moment. Decency was ignored or forgotten. The excesses of a Commodus or a Messalina were repeated with eastern embroidery, and matters became so bad that all decent people avoided the Court as they would a pestilence.

The murder of Peshora Singh afforded the army a pretext for extracting more money from Jowahir Singh, or if he could not pay up, replacing him by one who could. The panches were assembled at Lahore, and Jowahir Singh was arraigned on several charges, of misgovernment and embezzlement or wastefulness of public money, the true reason for the latter charge being that the army thought it might better have been spent upon themselves. However, it was decided that Jowahir Singh should have

an opportunity of defending himself, but as he failed to respond to the summons to appear before the panches, these condemned him to death in default.

Having possession of the fort, he shut himself up in this, relying upon the support of the two battalions which had been raised by Gardiner for him. His reliance was misplaced, for these two, including their commander, had submitted to the orders of the panches, and were now not his guards, but his jailors. He appealed to Gardiner, but was assured that there was absolutely no hope of escape, and exhorted to meet his inevitable death like a man. Frantic with fright he tried gate after gate of the fort, offering everything in his power if the guards would permit him to escape, but though they took the Rs. 50,000 he offered, they refused to permit him to go.

So matters went on for a couple of days. On the 21st of September, 1845, the army, tired of waiting, assembled on the plain at Mian Mir, about six miles from Lahore, and deputed an escort of four battalions to bring Jowahir Singh to their presence. Having been warned, Jowahir Singh decided to meet the trouble half-way, and escorted by his own two battalions, or perhaps, guarded by them, set out to Mian Mir. The procession consisted of four elephants, the leading one carrying Jowahir Singh and the Maharajah, and the others, some of his adherents and the Rani's slaves and companions. Half-way they were met by the brigade from Mian Mir, and these, turning around, proceeded towards the place where the army, numbering over 30 battalions of infantry, stood awaiting them.

As they came to the right of the line, the first two battalions presented arms, and encouraged by this demonstration of seeming friendliness, Jowahir Singh and the Rani moved on with more confidence. But this was misplaced, for as they reached the centre of the line, the drums beat and the centre battalion moved forward and separated into two parts, one of which surrounded Jowahir Singh's elephant, and the other those of the Rani. Before they came close enough, Jowahir Singh gave the order to the Mahout to accelerate his speed, but as he did so a soldier called upon him to halt. The Mahout did not obey, whereupon the soldier put a bullet through his shoulder, at which rude reminder he halted his elephant and commanded it to kneel.

This soldier, a man selected for his herculean physique and truculence, then climbed into the howdah, took the Maharajah from Jowahir Singh, and passed him down to his comrades, who

made him over to the Rani, and hurried her and her companions away behind the line, to where tents stood ready for them. Meanwhile, announcing that he was but carrying out the justice of the Khalsa, the soldier drove his bayonet several times into Jowahir Singh's body, and then cast him over the side of the elephant, to the soldiers beneath, who speedily reduced the body to a mass of mutilated flesh.

Several of the sirdars were similarly treated, and the whole of the bodies were thrown down outside the tent in which the Maharani and her women were confined. The next morning she was permitted to return to the fort, taking with her the dead body, which on the morning of the 22nd September was cremated, four of his wives being burnt with it. The scene was attended by brutality and callousness unexampled even at this period, for to such a pitch had the rapacity of the soldiers attained, that the suttees, who before were looked upon as of peculiar sanctity, were now molested, insulted, and robbed as they passed along to the funeral pile.

It was the custom that the women should distribute their personal belongings and jewels amongst the poor, but on this occasion no such voluntary act was permitted, for the soldiers robbed the trays of jewels and clothing and even tore away the ear and nose-rings of the suttees. One man even tore away the waist-band of one of the women's pyjamas, which was richly embroidered. This woman stood upon the pile, calling down curses and destruction on the Khalsa, and prophesying their speedy dissolution. Her ravings were speedily stopped, for one of the men came to the side and struck her down with the butt of his musket.

There being no aspirants for the Wazirat, the troops put it up to auction, and yet, dangerous as such a post was, there were bidders for it. Amongst these was Raja Lal Singh, the Rani's paramour, who offered Rs. 15 per head to the soldiers, but as there were others who bid higher, it was determined to cast lots. Even then it fell upon Lal Singh, but he and the others being unable to pay up the post fell in abeyance, except so far as the duties which the Rani performed.

The arrogance of the troops had now passed all bounds. Neither the Rani, nor anyone else, could satisfy their demands, and it became a case of either destroying the army, or being destroyed by them. Preferring the former alternative, the Rani set up a campaign of mendacity against the British, to whom she attributed the intention of conquering the Punjab, and especially

disbanding the Khalsa army. Rumours were also spread that the Hindustani soldiers of the Company were disaffected, and only awaited the opportunity of the Khalsa soldiery crossing the Sutlej to combine with them to drive the European soldiers into the sea, and share out the plunder of Hindustan and the lower provinces.

The idea was enthusiastically received by the soldiers, but not by the panches, who being wiser men, knew the real power of the English, and the fate that the Khalsa army would inevitably meet. For a time they held out, and it was not until the Rani reviled them as cowards and cast her petticoats at them that they decided to advance. Accordingly, on the 8th December, 1845, they crossed the Sutlej near Ferozepur, and within a few days the first of the battles which ended with the subjugation of the Punjab and its passing to the English was fought at Moodkee.

In conclusion, let us describe what these panches actually were. The panchayat, or village council, is an old institution in India, and when Sher Singh, wearied of the importunities of the mob, announced that he would only deal with deputations, the model of the panchayat was adapted to the army. Two men from each company or battery were selected to form the regimental panch and from these again another council was selected, who possessed extreme power, and carried out all negotiations.

But, though the panches superseded the officers in the regimental control, they did not do so in drill and manœuvre, for the parades, exercises, and training were carried out as regularly as ever, and though no deference was paid to the officers off parade or field service, they were supreme on these occasions. It was this system that took the British generals by surprise, for they anicipated an easy and bloodless victory over disorganised and unruly troops.

How matters fell out, history tells, for no army ever put up a braver and better fight against the English in India than did that of the Khalsa regulars of Ranjit Singh, who owed their training to the European adventurers.

# APPENDIX III

## ITINERARY OF A JOURNEY FROM PERSIA TO KABUL MADE IN THE YEAR 1826 BY CLAUDE AUGUSTE COURT

The total distance from Yezd to Herat is 200 parasangs (4 miles to a parasang). From Yezd the road runs north-east to Toun, and from thence north to Herat. Camel caravans, which are the main users of this route, can make the journey in 35 to 40 days. Horsemen can do it quite comfortably in 12 to 15 days, and even more comfortably by using wheeled carriages, as the track runs across open and level plains.

At each stage there are caravanserais, which were built by pious persons for the convenience of travellers and pilgrims to the shrine of Imam Reza at Meshed, the capital of Khorasan. There are also cisterns or wells at intermediate places, but owing to neglect of the provincial governors, they are, with few exceptions, dry or fallen in.

The plains are dry and arid, and so impregnated with saltpetre as to appear from a distance a sea of salt. The plains of Aliabad, Shah Abbas, Shiras, and Tarij are immense tracts, the sole vegetation on which are a few plants which thrive in saline soil. There are several ranges of low mountains, with easy slopes, the first being the sandy hills called the Rigks-Chatourans, which are about 50 parasangs from Herat.

North-east from Yezd we cross the great desert of Kabis or Kermani, to whose left extends another great salt desert. The desert of Kabis is skirted by the cities of Kachan, Kom, Semnon, Torchis, Toun and Tabas, and according to the inhabitants, is about 80 parasangs square. Near its middle are the Biabonek mountains, the slopes of which have many villages, surrounded by cultivated land, whose fertility strikingly contrasts with the dreary aridity surrounding the mountains. After leaving the Rigks-Chatourans, we cross the southern part of Khorasan, when making for Herat, passing by Tabas, which I believe to be the Tabiana of the Greeks.

I surmise that the country between this and Toun is their Parthanasia, and the many remarkable tombs to be met with as those of the Parthian kings. We next enter the Kain country,

which extends up to the Guesik chain, and then comes more desert, extending almost up to Herat for a distance of about 40 parasangs. There are several mountain chains, mostly low and isolated on this route. They are called the Khegner Koh, the Kohda Koh, and the Guesik mountains. All are of fair altitude, but extremely arid and barren, a characteristic which in my opinion is a proof of richness in metals.

It would pay to send a mineralogist to prospect this country, and I think he would make some useful discoveries. There is a lead mine near the village of Makhalon, about six parasangs north of Yezd. The Derind mountains show many traces of plumbago. The Posht Badam hills afford small quantities of gold dust, and near the town of Toun there is another lead mine. A copper mine is still worked on the reverse slope of the Khegner Koh, and there is a silver mine at a place called Shia Nogre. These mines are now abandoned on account of the excessive exactions of the Government, but would amply repay reopening.

Between Bucherisk and Toun many large and beautiful agates may be found lying exposed on the surface, especially in the Shia Jerez district. Near the Castle of Fourk is a copper mine, which supplied the metal for the cannon used in the fortifications of Birjan. The Guesik mountains afford plenty of sulphur, and on the west side, near the shrine of Imam Reza, is a warm spring of mineral water, which is used as a place of medicinal pilgrimage. Here we saw multitudes of very poisonous snakes.

On the hills extending from Rabat to Herat, a small thorny bush, from which is obtained the gum called "Taranjabin," much used in Persian medicine, was very plentiful. The main crop, however, is asafœtida, which grows wild and abundant on the hills extending across the western part of the province of Herat. This plant is about two or three feet high, its roots extending to an enormous distance. The gum is extracted by making a cross incision in the stem of the plant, from which the gum exudes, and congeals into tears, which are removed every evening. No care is taken of the plant, other than to cover it during the extreme heat. The smell is so detestable that we named it "The Devil's Dung." The greater part of it is exported to India, where it is greatly prized for culinary purposes.

The wild animals are wolves, a small kind of antelope, pigs, hares, and partridges. At the Kaboude salt springs we killed two enormous wild boars, and after passing these, encountered herds

of the wild asses so plentiful in Seistan. This animal is much larger than the domestic ass, which it resembles in everything else except that the cross on the back is brown, instead of black. It is extremely swift, and can travel for a long distance at great speed. Nor will it permit one to approach within gunshot. It is hunted by the Afghans, who esteem its flesh very highly.

Very few fruit trees grow round the hamlets in the Gask and Birjan districts, the principal being the "zerisk," which yields a small acid fruit used by the Persians to flavour their "pulaos." The juniper and jujube trees are also to be found, though not very plentiful.

From May to October the country between Yezd and Herat is subjected to very strong winds, the heat from which is stifling, though it does not seem to have any ill effect upon the inhabitants. The agricultural produce of the country is barely sufficient to feed even its few inhabitants, for with the exception of an occasional spring of brackish water, there are no means of irrigation. The water from these springs, which is most unpalatable, except to those long used to it, is collected in reservoirs and distributed with the utmost economy to the sad and miserable hamlets, which are barely discernible amidst the frightful aridity which surrounds them.

The people are not generally nomadic. The nomads consist of the Shudrais, the Kazeems, the Beni-Kazails, the Beni-Assad, and the Beni-Kefed, in the Toun and Tabas districts, and the Falahies, the Sahbies, the Hanouns, the Yakubis, and the El-Abudeids of the Kain country. All these nomads are of Arab origin, being mostly descendants of the colonies planted by Shah Abbas, or by Tamurlane. They have no Arab habits, except that of living in black tents, nor can they even speak or understand Arabic. They own large flocks and herds, which they pasture in the valleys and ravines of the mountains, and in general enjoy an easier existence than the people of the villages, who are always on the verge of starvation.

The normal condition of the country is famine, to which the ravages of the Baluchis and Turkomans contribute. What little cultivation there is, produces wheat, bitter radishes, beetroots, and sesame oil, which only scantily feeds those who cultivate it, and this scarcity of food, forage, and water makes it almost impossible for large bodies of troops to pass by this route unless they carry their own supplies. The first army known to cross these deserts is that of Shah Abbas, who returned by this route from his conquest of Kandahar.

This benevolent king was so appalled at the aridity of the country, and the danger of the continually shifting sands obliterating the track, that he sank wells and also built conical pyramids at stated places, as landmarks. These shifting sands are very dangerous, and are caused by desert whirlwinds, which blow from north-east to south-west during half the year, and in the reverse direction during the other half. The sand blown over in one direction is cast back by the reverse wind. It took us nearly five hours to cross the most dangerous part of these shifting sands, which we did by a pass named the Kabis, which was also that used by Mir Mahomed in 1722, when he marched an Afghan army to the conquest of Shah Sultan Hussain of Persia.

Since 1812 the crossing of these dunes has been rendered still more dangerous by the bands of Baluchi robbers who infest the route to ambush the caravans and slaughter the travellers. Their depredations since that date must have been something enormous. They have a regular system of reliefs, by which one band stays for a certain time, and then retires to make room for another. Each band is composed of thirty to 100 men, and these travel very rapidly when crossing the sands, doing, it is said, as much as 10 to 20 parasangs in a day.

Most of them are retainers of Jan Khan, chief of the tribes who inhabit the fastnesses of Sheikh Nasus on the Seistan frontier. This place is their rendezvous from whence they set out on their raids, and return to, in order to surrender a tribute of one-third of the booty. They are a most ferocious looking people, clothed only in a long cotton shirt, bound with a belt of camel hair, and a ragged turban. Their moustaches are shaven in the centre, leaving long drooping ends, and they also wear long hair, which hangs over the shoulders.

After crossing the dunes, they meet at Shia Bakhtiari, where there is a good spring, and they are in league with the inhabitants. At this place they leave their camels, and dividing into bands, dispose themselves along the road. They may attack anywhere, but their favourite slaughter-house is the narrow defile of Godar Kamar, on the north, where they conceal themselves below the reverse slopes. They are careful not to show themselves until the caravan is well within the pass, when they swoop down upon it and slaughter everyone who shows the least resistance.

Their ruthless cruelty has inspired such terror that a band of thirty men has been known to plunder and murder a kafila of 200 travellers. The massacres are numberless, the most terrible being that of 1823, when they cut the throats of over 200 pilgrims,

travelling from Yezd to Meshed. The burial-place of these unfortunate people is marked by a great cairn, near the third distance post.

We passed the bodies of five travellers, who had just been murdered, and found the murderers still at Shia Bakhtiari, where, however, they did not molest us, our party being too strong. Our advance guard came into conflict with a party of robbers returning from a raid, and these men we surrounded, and with the exception of two, put to the sword. The two survivors, who were wounded, we took on to Rabat, where we tied them to trees and riddled them with bullets.

During the execution, the villagers gathered round, and their scowling attitude convinced us that they were in league with the Baluchis, whom, it was said, they provided with water, provisions and shelter, receiving in return a share of the plunder. The Baluchis have other confederates in the villages of Sagah and Posht Badam, who are well known to the authorities. The Governor of the province takes no active steps to stop these outrages, which he could easily do, and occasionally sends out a cavalry patrol, who return without effecting anything. It is surprising to find that the Prince of Yezd permits this kind of robbery with impunity. He has officers at Kharone, Sagah, and other places, who, though they have at their disposal quite sufficient force to keep the roads safe, content themselves with warning caravans not to proceed, when the Baluchis are known to be out.

The natives keep men posted on the hills, who signal by fires whenever the raiders are in the vicinity, and on this the natives retire into their fortified villages, or towers, until the coast is clear. The result of this laxness is that travellers only enter upon this journey when compelled, and then with fear and trembling. Besides the danger from the Baluchis, there is that from Turkomans, which is really worse, for whereas the Baluchi only plunders, or kills, the Turkoman plunders and carries man, woman, or child into slavery.

These man-stealers belong to the Imak tribe, whose headquarters are at Mehmaneh, about 8 days' journey from Herat, and from time immemorial have ravaged Khorasan and the Herat country with impunity. Their raids are rapid, and both plunder and slaves are disposed of at Bokhara. There is also a religious motive behind these slave raids, for the Turkomans are Sunnis, who hate the Persian Shiahs with an inveterate ferocity. We ascertained that the Turkoman danger commenced at Toun, and continued right up to Herat, so as the most dangerous place was

between the villages of Kain and Kawf, we persuaded our caravan leader to quit the main route for a more southerly one, passing near the town of Birjan.

However, this precaution nearly defeated itself, for when but three days' journey from Herat, we were suddenly attacked by a band of Baluchi robbers, who were only beaten off after a stubborn running fight, lasting for several miles. The unfortunate inhabitants have neither security nor repose, for whilst continually striving to wring a livelihood from the reluctant earth, they are also kept incessantly on the alert against the Turkomans. In the outlying fields they have built small towers, the entrance to which is reached by a ladder, and into these they retire when the raiders are about.

There is not a single family in these districts which has not a member enslaved by the Turkomans, and yet, it is most surprising to learn that these captives prefer captivity to freedom in their own inhospitable country. They often write to their parents or relations, expressing their pleasure at having found a happy condition of life, and assure them that it would be folly to make any sacrifice to obtain money for their redemption: some of them even accompany the Turkomans as guides, and give active assistance in the slavery of their compatriots.

The ravages of the Turkomans and Baluchis are so great and themselves so numerous that even Herat was occasionally harried, forcing Prince Kamran to enter into alliance with the Prince of Khorasan for mutual defence against this incessant brigandage. This danger induced me to leave the caravan at Sideh, and repair to Birjan, in order to obtain an escort from the Governor of that place, whom I had known at the Court of Teheran. I learnt from him that M. Oms, who had left the Persian service in 1824, to seek military service in India, had been captured and imprisoned in the Castle of Fourk, from which he had only just managed to escape. The contrast between the treatment of Senor Oms, and my own reception, caused me to appreciate the usefulness of an old acquaintance.

I managed to secure an escort, and dividing this into two parts, sent one to my friend Avitabile with instructions to take the route by Gisk and Nohkap, and meet me at Avez. As for myself, I took the route *via* Fourk, in which I was accompanied by the Governor's own son, who escorted me as far as Avaz. We found the province of Herat involved in a civil war between Prince Kamran and his father, Mahmud Shah. The latter had been

expelled from the throne, and having formed an alliance with Burit Khan, Chief of the Azeres, the two returned and besieged Herat in the month of June, 1826.

However, the desertions from their ranks were so numerous that Mahmud Shah and his ally were compelled to raise the siege and retire to Farrah. Meanwhile, Prince Kamran managed to secure the alliance of the Prince of Khorasan, who was much gratified by the submission of a ruler, who till then, had declined to acknowledge his vassalage. Appreciating the advantages of the alliance, he sent his son, Agha Mirza, with 10,000 men and four cannon, to join Kamran, and this force we found encamped on the banks of the Morghab river. In order to oppose the reinforcements sent by the Khan of Mehmaneh, Mahmud Shah.

I shall now describe the city of Herat, and its environs. The city of Herat is that called Aria by the Greeks, and is said to have been founded by Alexander the Great. Tradition says that the valley in which the city lies was once filled by a lake, formed by the water of the Heri river being pent up in the Lengherjan hills, and that Alexander, after having pierced the hills and drained the valley, was so struck by the beauty of the sight that he commanded a city to be built upon it. This is incorrect, for it is quite certain that Aubee, about ten parasangs east of Herat, was the actual city founded by Alexander.

The present city of Herat is small, and surrounded by a high mud wall flanked by towers of the same material. It is further defended by a wide and deep moat, which is always kept full of water. It contains 10,000 houses, twenty serais, thirty public baths, four markets, six colleges, and the Castle of the Prince. The population is about 40,000, two-thirds of whom are Persians, and the rest mostly Afghans. The only remarkable thing within the city is the great reservoir of Ibrahim Jamshed Khan, which is fed by subterranean streams flowing from the mountains. This reservoir supplies most of the water requirements of the city.

The principal manufactures are silken and woollen goods, and the trade mostly with Bokhara, Kandahar, Meshed, and Yezd, the merchants from which frequent the city in considerable numbers. The city was sacked by Jenghiz Khan in A.D. 619, and still later by Tamurlane, whose descendants still hold it. The surroundings are not particularly attractive or pleasant. The most remarkable places are the mansion of Take Safar Gazergah, the Mosque of Musa Allah, and the garden of Shah Zada Malik Kasum.

The mosque is a building of a kind rather uncommon in Persia, and is now almost in ruins. There remains still intact ten minarets and a small madrassah, and from these and the rest of the ruins we are able to distinguish the general architectural style, which was simple, elegant, and admirably suited to the climate. The walls were decorated with mosaics of glazed tiles, in delicate shades and combinations of colours, the effects of which were very pleasing.

The minarets are tall and beautifully proportioned, one of them leaning towards the Tomb of Imam Reza at Meshed, an accidental inclination which the Persians hail as a miracle. This once magnificent building is supposed to have been erected at a stupendous cost by the favourite slave and vazir of Guhar Shah. But it is also attributed to Ghazi-ud-Din, a Sultan of the Ghori dynasty. The buildings were mostly destroyed by the Tartars under Jenghiz Khan.

Not far from Gazargarh there still exists a ruby mine, which, however, has been abandoned, because the stones were perforated with minute holes. On the eastern side of the same mountains there is a lead mine, still worked by Prince Kamran. The mountains are well wooded, and extend far to the north. Besides timber of many species, they yield medicinal herbs, seeds and roots, from some of which dye-stuffs far superior to any European products are extracted.

The valley of Herat is one of the most fertile and beautiful we have yet seen. When approaching it, the rich beauty of the plantations, and the villages surrounded by picturesque gardens are very grateful to the eye of the traveller long tired by nothing but dreary and arid deserts and mountains. The valley is about four parasangs from north to south, and thirty from east to west, and no less than 12,000 pairs of bullocks are employed in cultivating it. Grain and fruits are plentiful. Of the latter there are no less than thirty-two varieties of grapes.

The grape vines are carefully cultivated and the whole of the valley is intersected by canals, supplied from the Herat river, which almost entirely absorb its waters. The largest canal is the Enjil, which waters the Royal garden, and supplies the city moat. The Herat river rises in the eastern mountains, and running from east to west, finally disappears into the sands of the desert north of Khorasan. The road to Kandahar crosses the river by a bridge at Malan, and that from Meshed crosses the river several times, for its course is extremely tortuous.

Since the death of Nadir Shah, the Afghans and Persians have continually battled for possession of Herat, the victory now remaining with the former. In the year 1816 the Persians took advantage of the Afghans being engaged in another war to win a battle at Kala, but being, by reason of very severe losses, unable to follow up the victory, they derived no advantage from it. At present they cannot take any further action, being fully occupied with insurrections in Khorasan. After the Barakzais had dethroned Mahmud Shah, he took refuge in Herat, but was dispossessed by his son, Kamran, who still rules it.

This prince is about fifty years of age, grave, strong-willed, and able and energetic. His greatest anxiety just now is to retain the city, for he has few men and little money, and cannot do any more than remain on the defensive. He would be very pleased to either come to an arrangement with the Barakzais for complete independence, or to ally himself with his father against their common enemy. If the latter could be compassed, there would be much chance of overthrowing the Barakzai rule, which is so frightfully cruel and oppressive that the tribes would gladly join any leader having a chance of victory.

The city could be well fortified, and its possession would be most desirable for any Russian army advancing to invade India. A strong force occupying Herat would not only hold the forces of Bokhara, Balkh, and Kandahar in check, or ensure their alliance, but would also assure the safety of the lines of communication, thus relieving the commander of an advancing army of any anxiety concerning them.

ITINERARY OF A JOURNEY FROM HERAT TO KABUL, *viâ* KANDAHAR.

There is a choice of two routes for this journey, one being by the Azeres mountains, taking eight to ten days, and the other, *viâ* Kandahar, which is much longer. Being desirous of completing our journey as soon as possible, we first decided to take the mountain road, but on consultation with those who had travelled both ways, we decided to take the longer one, for the roads over the mountain were reported very difficult, and besides, travellers by that route are liable to much more oppression than ordinary from persons of authority.

To Kandahar the road runs along the western borders of the Feroz Koh mountains, which extend up to Kandahar, and separate Seistan from the province of Gaur. The distance is about 125 parasangs. The greater part of the road is through fairly open country, crossed in several places by low mountains, which, how-

ever, are quite practicable for artillery and wheeled transport. The greatest difficulty for the passage of an army would be supplies of water, for the country is sparsely populated, little cultivated, and greatly deficient in water supplies.

At some of the halting-places no water whatever is procurable, and these stages should either be doubled, or water carried on from the camping-ground before. The only places at which provisions in any quantity are procurable are Gerishk and Farrah. Kafilas using this route are usually composed either entirely of horses, or camels. Mules are very uncommon. The charge for the full journey for each camel is from 100 to 120 *battimais* and for each horse from twenty to thirty. There is also a joining fee of three sequins for a camel, and six sequins for a horse.

The camel caravans take twenty-five days to complete the journey, but the horse caravans, who travel almost night and day, just halting long enough for food and the minimum of rest, do the journey in eight, or at the most, ten. The bands of roving thieves who infest this route do not usually attack moving kafilas, and as the horse caravans are much smaller than the camel kafilas, they avoid, or minimise, danger by halting at uncertain places, changing them on each journey.

A march usually commences at noon, and continues until about midnight, when the caravan is halted for rest, food, and water. About 4 A.M. they set out again, and continue until eight or nine o'clock, when another halt until noon is made. This system of hurried, broken, and continual travelling is extremely trying to those not inured to it, for which reason only the hardiest travellers move with horse kafilas.

We left Herat on the first of October, 1826. Before quitting it, we exchanged our Persian costumes for those of the Afghans and also had our beards and moustaches trimmed in the Afghan manner. Up till then we had passed as Shiah Mussalmans, using their peculiar ceremonial, but as the Afghans are fanatical Sunnis, we changed over to their observances. The hatred of the one sect for the other is extreme, and this precaution was absolutely indispensable for the safety of life and property.

Our first stage was to Shahabad, which is situated at the outer end of the Mandaud defile. During the passage, I and my friend Avitabile, who had moved on ahead, narrowly escaped being cut off and murdered by the Nurzais, who infest the defile. A band of them suddenly swooped down from the slope, and we only escaped by the exertions of our fine Arab horses, which were tried to the utmost.

After passing the defile, we skirted along the Feroz Koh mountains, the highest peak of which gives the name to the range. From this, which is not very lofty, there are visible two other ranges, called the Kauk and Kassarman, which extend far to the westward. With the exception of a few ravines and valleys, which are inhabited and sparsely cultivated by pastoral tribes, the Feroz Koh is arid and desolate. These nomads live in black tents, and keep to the banks of the mountain streams, along which are many camping-grounds, connected by paths practicable for ponies.

After leaving Shahabad, we diverged from the main road, as our kafila basha had heard that the troops of Mahmud Shah, who were encamped along this road, plundered all travellers indiscriminately. The hilly country we now traversed was crossed by two small rivers, called the Ghaz and the Adiriska, both of which run from north-east to south-west, and discharge into the Farrah river. At that season they were nearly dry, but when the snows melt, they become greatly swollen, and caravans are sometimes delayed for many days before the flood subsides.

The prevailing tree is the wild pistachio, which flourishes in the most arid places, and in addition to fruit, yields a useful gum for medicinal purposes. Rhubarb and gooseberries also grow wild on the mountain-sides. We emerged from the Karik mountains, which took two days to cross, into the plain of Daulatabad, descending to it by a rather difficult pass. There is an easier one towards the west, which emerges on to the main road to Farrah, but we were not able, for reasons already stated, to take that route.

Farrah is the birthplace of Rustam Khan, the Hercules of the East, of whom so much is written in the Shah-Nama of Firdausi. Except for the environs of the city, the plain of Farrah is uncultivated, though crossed from east to west by an unnamed river, which rises in the Feroz Koh, crosses part of Seistan, and finally discharges into the Zeri lake. This river is probably the Ar Palus of the Greeks, and I assume that Farrah itself is the city they named Phra, and the Farrah river their Pharnacotis.

When we crossed the Farrah river, it was low, but we were told that in the spring it is greatly swollen, and impossible to ford. The current is swift, and runs over a pebbly bed, whilst the banks are covered by the black tents of the Nurzais. After crossing the Farrah plain, we again quitted the main road, to avoid the troops, and took the branch leading to the Penjdeh pass, which we found very difficult for pack animals, and indeed, bad enough for foot travellers. This pass is remarkable for its eastern

exit, which is an immense natural doorway formed by two perpendicular rocks, crossed by a third. A small river which runs through the gateway adds to the wild picturesqueness of the scene.

There is a main route which runs through the Kassarman pass, and is not so difficult, though it is six parasangs longer. Leaving the Penjdeh Pass, we debouched on to a great plain, which extended out of sight to the south. This is crossed by a small stream called the Ibrahim, which irrigates the land surrounding a village oasis called Bakoba. Wild asses, antelope, and hare are plentiful, and in the centre of the plain is an isolated mountain named Koh-i-Douz.

As we passed the northern flank of this mountain, we were suddenly attacked by a band of Baluchi robbers, some on camels, and others on horses. This attack was so sudden that, at the first surprise, the robbers managed to cut off and get away with six animals. Whilst they were engaged in so doing, we closed into a hollow square, surrounding the animals, and from this, by our continual fire, repelled the Baluchis on all sides with considerable loss, so that they eventually drew off and left us to continue our march. However, we did not recover the captured animals.

After this contretemps, we travelled very carefully, momentarily expecting to encounter more Baluchis, but were fortunate enough not to do so. We halted at the village of Vouchek, which contains about 100 houses, enclosed within a high mud wall. Even amongst Afghans, who are most efficient thieves, the inhabitants of Vouchek are singularly expert. They do not steal openly, but crowd around the caravan, and await any opportunity to make off with animals or plunder. They are the most rascally scoundrels and petty thieves I have ever encountered.

The country to the north-east of this village is not cultivated. The river Kachroud, which runs through it, is said to be usually a strong torrent, but we found it nearly dry. After leaving Vouchek, we crossed some hilly and savage country, from which we descended into the plain of Lars, the country of the Sebazais. We then skirted the Dahor mountains, which are inhabited by the Alizai. This country is probably the *Dahoe* of Alexander, which he invaded and conquered immediately after defeating the Syrians.

As we neared Gerishk, the country gradually changed to scenery much more agreeable, for the district is irrigated by the Helmund river, and well cultivated. I believe this river, which rises in the Gour mountains, and at first runs from north-east to

south-west, and then changing its course, crosses Seistan to the eastward, to be the *Etymander* of the Greeks. It discharges into the Zeri lake.

The river marked Sambarra on the maps does not pass Gerishk closely, but flows between it and the village of Kala Sadad Khan, about four parasangs west of Gerishk. The river Helmund runs over a gravelly bottom, and though the current is extremely swift, the water is very clear. It frequently overflows, and in the year 1825, an abnormal flood overwhelmed nearly 10,000 black tents scattered along the banks, causing an immense loss of life. The river is fordable in the dry season at several places, the best being that near Gerishk, which is marked by a row of poplar trees, on the opposite bank.

Some distance beyond Gerishk, the river divides into two branches, of which the eastern is the greatest. Both branches are fordable for horsemen, and light guns might also be passed over, though it would be impossible to take over ammunition wagons. Ferry boats do not exist, such vehicles being unknown to the Afghans, which is strange, for the neighbouring mountains furnish plenty of suitable timber.

Gerishk is a large village, some distance from the Helmund, which once ran beneath its walls, the old river-bed being now utilised as rice-fields. It is defended by a citadel situated on a high mound which, however, is of little use, being merely of mud crumbling to pieces. The side facing eastward is precipitous, but on the other three the country is cut up by ravines, through which the citadel could be approached quite unobserved, and undermined. The city and citadel were built by Burdil Khan, at one time Governor of Kandahar, and is the stronghold of the Barakzai tribe.

The Barakzais are the dominant power in Afghanistan. They have divided the dominions of Mahmud Khan amongst themselves, and each chief rules most despotically and cruelly. They are eternally at feud, and frequent and bloody fights occur between the brothers, of whom there are many.

At Gerishk we were subjected to the most rigorous search by the customs officers, who actually stripped us quite naked, and used every possible artifice to induce to discover anything in the way of money or goods that had not been declared. Of whatever is declared they take 5 per cent. and also a tax of five sequins for every pack animal. If any goods which have not been declared are discovered, the whole is confiscated, and the owners severely ill-treated. Naturally, we were extremely glad to quit the place.

From Gerishk to Kandahar is about twenty parasangs, through a hot and arid country, enclosed within the Feroz Koh and Mahsud ranges. The latter mountains divide into two smaller ranges, within which is enclosed the district of Maiwand, a place renowned for its fruit, especially pomegranates (and many years later, for a severe British defeat).

We next arrived at Kosh Nakout, on the western side of Kandahar. The Arghandab river crosses the Kandahar plain, and flows into the Helmund about four parasangs beyond Gerishk. To the southward of this plain are shifting sands, which extend for forty parasangs up to the Nushki and Kehran districts of Baluchistan. The rivers of this province are the Arghandab, Tarlok, Arkasan, and Dori, all of which flow westward into the Helmund river. I believe that the Arghandab is the *Arachotis* of the Greeks. It rises in the Gol Koh mountains of the Navod district.

After crossing the Arghandab, we ascended into the mountains some distance from the river bank, and from thence entered the plain of Kandahar by the Shil Zini pass, which is thus named from forty steps leading up to a cave near the mountain top, formerly inhabited by a descendant of Tamurlane, who turned hermit. On the highest point of the pass are the ruins of a small fort, and from this we obtained a magnificent view of the country beneath. To one side extended the great plain of Kandahar, and on the other a magnificent valley covered with fields and highly cultivated orchards.

We noticed that the plain of Kandahar is covered by a net-work of canals, which should render its crossing by a large army very difficult. Nature has been prodigal of its benefits to this district by bestowing upon it the Kandahar river, from which the canals are cut. The principal of these are the Nausajan and Partab. The latter passes through the village of Shil Doktor, and then turns towards Kandahar.

The city of Kandahar was founded by Ahmad Shah. Its buildings are mean, there being few of any architectural pretensions. The two great streets which cross the city at right angles from east to west and north to south meet in the centre, and the square formed by their intersection is called the Char Souk. The only remarkable building is the tomb of Ahmad Shah, which has a beautiful octagonal dome. It was at one time surrounded by beautiful gardens, but these are now desolate.

The population, numbering about 25,000, comprises Afghans, Persians, Baluchis, and Hindus, the different races being

distinguished by their distinctive head-dress. The Persians are the most numerous. The women of Kandahar are more rigorously secluded than in Persia, the few that one does see belonging to the Koli tribe, who act as surgeons and blood-letters. In the streets may be seen some most extraordinary people called Rulaids (saints) who go about entirely naked. They are supposed to be mentally afflicted, and, as such, are tolerated by the Afghans, who believe that such persons are under the especial protection of the Almighty.

Not only are these persons respected during life, but reverenced after death, the peculiarly shaped tombs in which they are buried upright becoming shrines. There are many of these around Kandahar, chiefly at Shah Mahsud, about ten parasangs north of the city, and there are also others at Babi Wala and Asredji.

From the Mahsud mountains are obtained the amber-like beads universally used for rosaries by the Afghans. They are found in white, yellow, black, and grey colours, but the yellow ones are the only ones used for rosaries. The others are pounded up and used as a medicine, or an aphrodisiac.

The defences of Kandahar consist of a wall flanked by bastions, and a wide and deep moat, which is always full of water, drawn from the Partab canal, which could easily be diverted, and thus not only drain the moat, but cut off the main supply of water for the city, there being only a few wells within the walls. The walls would not stand the bombardment of siege guns for any lengthened period.

There are three older cities of Kandahar, all equally in ruins. Those of the first, which was destroyed by Nadir Shah, are still visible on the western slopes of the Mahsud mountains, and the remains of the batteries from which it was bombarded are still visible. Tradition relates that for a long time he was unable to reduce the city, the defences of which were exceedingly strong, for in addition to the walls surrounding the city itself, others radiated in all directions down the slope. The city was betrayed to him by the daughter of its defender, Shah Hussein, but her reward, instead of the marriage she expected, was death.

This city may have been that which Alexander is said to have built on the Arachosis, but I think that Eskarguengi, which stood about four parasangs north of Kandahar, was more likely to have been Alexander's city. The third of these ruined cities is at Shersouk, south of Kandahar, and was founded by Nadir Shah after his destruction of the original city of Kandahar.

The Kandahar district is extremely fertile. The crops are wheat, barley, tobacco, cotton, rice, maize, millet, peas, beans, sesame, and other food-grains common to Asiatic countries. Fruit is extremely plentiful—grapes, apples, pears, cherries, mulberries, and pomegranates being the principal. The cultivation of the grape is very well understood, and there are numerous varieties to be found in the vineyards and orchards which line the borders of the Arghandab river for many miles.

The climate is healthy, except for fevers and cholera, the latter of which is prevalent in the autumn, and undoubtedly due to excessive indulgence in the melons, pumpkins, and cucumbers which at that season are so plentiful. The spring and autumn are mild, the summer very hot, whilst the winter is short and dry. Snow falls only about once in seven years.

The principal tribes are the Barakzais, the Alizais, and the Populzais, the two latter of whom are nomadic, and very wealthy in camel, sheep, and cattle. The personality of the Afghan is best represented at Kandahar, for though they are met with in numbers at Herat, the mixture of other races in that city serves to tone them down. Their manners are far more gross and brutal than those of the Persians, but they lack the pride and bad faith so characteristic of the latter. They do not attempt to imitate the Persians in facetiousness or vapid compliments, but are grave, polite, and frank with strangers.

The European travelling in Afghanistan is impressed by the familiar intercourse and apparent equality which exists between all classes. Yet the equality is only apparent, for they are subject to that kind of semi-slavery inseparable from a despotic government. Yet they pride themselves on their national liberty, which really means that they will brook no foreign or alien ruler. They are brave to a fault, and I should class them amongst the most fearless soldiers in the world. But this is their only military qualification, for they cannot understand tactics or strategy.

Their military defects are shown by the examples to be collected from the armies which from time to time invaded India, the most striking being that of the army under Ahmad Shah. They love disorder for the opportunities for plunder it affords. They are fanatics in religion, and though tolerating the Christians, cordially detest the Persian Shiahs, to whom they are most cruel and merciless when opportunity affords. They are firm believers in astrology and talismans, but are, in general, illiterate, the only exceptions being a few of the chiefs, who can read and write a little Persian, and the Akhunds, who are a trifle more proficient.

The education of the Afghan is practically purely military, consisting in learning the use of arms, riding, and horse-mastership, and with them, luxury consists in fine horses, their trappings, and highly ornamented shields and arms. Their houses are very similar to those of the Persians, but much more simply furnished, and their dress is somewhat similar, with the exception of the turban, which replaces the sheep-skin cap generally worn by the Persian. This turban consists of a great blue and gold, or variously coloured, mass of muslin, wound around a skull cap, and its shape varies with the tribe or locality. As the weight of the turban and its shape makes the head very hot, they shave their heads. Their beards are trimmed to a spade-shaped point, and moustaches, though shaved clear in the middle, allowed to grow very long and drooping.

The usual diet of the Afghan is meat, rice, wheat, and other grains, and krout, a preparation of curdled milk, to which they are very partial. Though in general sober, a few of the Afghans indulge in wine and other fermented liquors, occasionally to excess. But the principal intoxicant is a preparation called charas, produced from hemp seeds, which, when moderately indulged in, produces a dreamy kind of stupor, but if prolonged or taken in excess, ends with madness or imbecility.

Since 1818, Kandahar has been governed by five brothers, Pir Dil Khan, Sher Kil Khan, Khan Kil Khan, Ram Dil Khan, and Mir Dil Khan. The army consists of 6,000 horse and 5,000 foot, but could easily be trebled at very short notice. The Kandaharis rely principally upon "arme blanche," and are very indifferent musketeers. The footmen are armed with a heavy matchlock of short range, and a ponderous knife, which even with them, is chiefly relied upon. They have about twenty guns, the majority of which are in bad condition, or without gunners. This branch of their service is commanded by an English half-caste ("William Leigh").

The government is despotic, and will commit any crime or outrage to obtain money. For a subject to be rich, or to be even suspected of being so, is a crime, punishable with confiscation of goods and money, the culprit being fortunate to escape with his life. The local currency is nominally silver, but what is in circulation consists mostly of copper, for the silver coinage has been so debased that people are very chary of accepting it. Foreign traders must have all their coin stamped by the local government, who charge them 50 per cent. for the operation. Any foreign money not so stamped is confiscated.

Any artificer, merchant, manufacturer, or trader who wishes to do business must have his wares inspected by a government official. This person fixes the price, and any evasion of the inspection, or increase in the price fixed, ensures a merciless confiscation and a term of imprisonment. Owing to this, trade which at one time flourished exceedingly now either languishes or, in some cases, has become non-existent. Kandahar is the main exchange depôt where merchandise imported from India, or Persia, meets. The Indian goods come by way of Shikarpore, though shawls from Kashmir are imported by way of Kabul. The only local manufactures are silk and cotton goods, and these, owing to the decline in produce, caused by the conditions before related, are barely sufficient for local consumption. There is an export trade in fruit, tobacco, and charas, which is conveyed to India by way of Shikarpore.

The road to Shikarpore is difficult, intricate, and about 260 miles long. Its only use is by the traders during spring, for in the summer months there is no water available along the route, and if it should become absolutely necessary to march troops into India by that route, the only possible way would be to establish water and grain depôts in advance, supplied from either, or both, ends. On this account, the traders usually take the northern route, which passes Kelat Nazil Khan, and crosses the Dahui country, ending at Dera Ghazi Khan. This road from Kandahar to Kabul is quite easy and good during the summer months, but impassable in the winter on account of snow. The grades are fairly easy, and artillery or transport wagons could use this route.

After leaving Kandahar, the road continues into a fertile valley, contained between two ranges running nearly north-east and parallel to Kabul. The more northerly range is the Paropamismus of the Greeks, and is the highest. The southerly one is barren, and appears to abound in metals. The whole valley is very fertile, and near Mokkhor is crossed by a tributary of the Arghandab river, called the Ternak. The climate is very salubrious, which is probably the reason why an ancient and ruined city which lies between Jeldak and Jauti was called Sher-i-Safeh, or the City of Health. The mountains to the north, and the moving sands to the south, constitute Kandahar a "tete du pont," *whose possession is absolutely necessary to an army invading India, for to hold it means to secure their line of communications.*

There being no caravans leaving for Kabul at the moment, we were compelled to remain at Kandahar for some time, and did

not obtain a place in one until the 26th December. After leaving Kandahar, we passed on to Mokkhor, a distance of forty kos, which took us four days, the intermediate stages being Pout and Jeldak Taxi. There are very few villages, but there are numerous camps of black tents, tenanted by Saddozais, Ali-Kozais, and Ghilzais, all of whom are nomadic. The dress of the women is peculiar. It somewhat resembles the European bodice and skirt, but the former is gathered at the breast into an infinity of small pleats, which cover the whole of the body to the top of the neck. Their hair is parted on the forehead, in two great plaits which fall over the shoulders. The unmarried ones, who are secluded, dress their hair differently, forming it into a chignon at the back, whilst the front locks are drawn over and partly obscure the face. Both married and single women, though supposed to go constantly veiled, very seldom do so.

At Tazi we were stopped by the Ghilzai chief who owns the town, and levies local taxes on all comers. This tax practically amounts to robbery, for there is no fixed tariff, and the amount is only limited by what he can extract. He was most unmerciful with us, even appropriating such of our arms as pleased him, and seemed quite surprised when we protested, though of course, without any effect.

A traveller in this country, just before winter has set in, will be struck by the number of wooden racks in each village, or encampment, to which are suspended sides of smoked and salted mutton, which after being dried, are exported to Afghanistan. Here they are further preserved by being frozen, and form the principal part of the meat eaten by the Afghans, who are said to have acquired this taste from the Tartars. Near Mokkhor, which is situated on the southern slope of the Gul Koh mountain, is the Tarnek river, which affords an abundance of excellent fish. The most striking peculiarity of the natives of Mokkhor is their readiness to afford lodgings to travellers, an evidence of hospitality we found nowhere else on our journey.

Six kos beyond the eastern side of the mountain there is a salt lake (Zourmat), which at night gives off phosphorescent gleams, such as those that may be seen at night in the Mediterranean and other open seas. After leaving Zourmat, we crossed the plains of Karabagh and Nani, which extend right up to Ghuznee, and are covered with villages, each surrounded with a high mud wall, having bastions at each corner. These fortified villages are rendered necessary by the continual tribal and faction warfare, and

such villages as are not immediately concerned shut themselves up, and hold aloof, otherwise they would be preyed upon by either, or perhaps both, sides.

Just before reaching Ghuznee, our kafila leader was informed that it would be very dangerous to enter the city, so he decided to avoid it, and leaving the main road, halted for the night in a village some six miles to the right of Ghuznee. The decision having been taken very suddenly, there was no time to recall M. Avitabile, who had the evening before gone on with some merchants attached to the caravan and spent the night in Ghuznee.

For ourselves, at daybreak next morning, we were aroused by the tumultuous arrival of a number of horsemen, whose sinister air and omission of the usual ceremonious greeting boded no good. Shortly after came a crowd of others, who surrounded the village and then swamped the streets. We were made prisoners, our goods taken into the possession of the horsemen, and ourselves bound on camels and taken prisoners to Ghuznee.

On arrival, we were confined in the serais, each in a separate room, and subjected to the most rigorous search. I in particular was stripped to the skin, and so roughly treated that they almost skinned me. I trembled for the safety of the numerous notes I had taken during the journey, but luckily these had been sown in the bosom of my eastern dress, and escaped detention. As for money, they fairly hurled themselves upon the few sequins I had upon me, and searched my garments and my person again and again for more.

It was very lucky for us that, under the advice of our friends at Herat, we had obtained letters of credit on Kabul for all but necessary expenses attendant upon the journey to Kandahar. But for this precaution, we should not only have been robbed of all we possessed, but probably murdered. The next day the Governor sent for me and rigorously interrogated me. He enquired who I was, whence I came, and what was the object of my travels, to which I replied that I was a Russian Georgian, proceeding to India to rejoin my parents, who were in the service of Maharajah Ranjit Singh.

He received my statements with a most sarcastic smile, and bluntly told me that I was lying, for he was convinced that I was a European. Before him, on the table, were displayed my watch, mathematical instruments, and papers of notes which had now been discovered, all of which seemed greatly to puzzle him. He asked me what was the use of the mathematical instruments, a question

which put me in a difficulty, for had I acknowledged they were used for surveying, the consequences would have been very serious. However, I got out of the difficulty by affirming that I knew nothing whatever of their use, for they had been entrusted to me by an Englishman at Teheran, for conveyance to a friend in India.

He then enquired what I had done with my money, for it was impossible that the small sum found on my person could be all I owned, and when I replied that I had no more, he savagely told me I lied, and enquired where I had hidden it. To this I remarked, how was it possible that I could hide anything when I had been stripped to the skin, and the whole of my belongings and clothing searched to the utmost? Eventually, finding that threats could elicit nothing from me, he ordered me back to the serai, where to my delight I found M. Avitabile, who had also been surprised, imprisoned, and searched.

Luckily, we had foreseen such a contingency before departure from Ispahan, and concerted a tale, in which we had so well tutored our servants, so that though all were interrogated separately, our replies were similar. Realising our dangerous predicament, we held counsel as to how we should escape, or obtain aid, and at last decided to despatch to Kabul, in secret, the servant whom our friends in India (Allard and Ventura) had sent to meet us at Herat, and escort us to India.

Calling him in, we instructed him to seek out Jubbar Khan, brother of the Governor of Ghuznee, who being a great friend of M. Ventura, would certainly help us. Even of his fidelity we were somewhat doubtful, so decided that M. Avitabile should accompany him. The messenger had charge of our horses, and was permitted to take them out to water every morning. And the plan was that he should pass as close as possible to the wall of the serai. As he did, M. Avitabile dropped from the wall, and leaving the other horses behind, the two galloped off, and were out of reach before the alarm was given.

Some days after their departure, I was greatly surprised at the change of attitude of the Governor, who up till then had only reviled me daily. On the sixth morning his attitude completely changed. He covered me with kindness, made all kinds of apologies for this treatment up till then, which he affirmed was entirely due to myself for not having informed him that I was a friend of the friend of his brother, Jubbar Khan. At first I thought he was trying to entrap me, and was very wary, until he handed me a letter from M. Avitabile, which informed me that my friend had reached Kabul and been very well received.

I remained as an honoured guest until my effects were collected and restored to me, and then having been given an escort, set off for Kabul, where I arrived on the 13th November, 1826. I proceeded to the house of the Nawab Jubbar Khan, where I met my friend M. Avitabile, and with him enjoyed the hospitality of the Nawab, whose courtesy and friendliness quickly obliterated from my memory the very different treatment of his brother.

There are four stages in the journey from Ghuznee to Kabul, these being Chezgu, Sheokabad, and Maidan. At Chezgu we crossed a small river of very clear water, which rising near the Azeres mountains, passes through the Logurd district and empties into the Kabul river, which we crossed near Maidan, the only place where it is fordable.

## Alphabetical list of adventurers and travellers mentioned.

A.

Aga Beg (Pole).
Alexander.
Allard, Jean Francois.
Alvarine.
Amise (see Oms).
Argoud, Benoit.
Avitabile, Paolo Di.

B.

Baker, George.
Barlow.
Bates or Battice.
Bell.
Benet, Doctor.
Bianchi.
Bin Toora, Reuben.
Birch.
Boigne, Benoit de.
Bourquin.
Boyle.
Brown, John (see Potter).
Browne.

C.

Campbell, William.
Carron (see Gordon).
Cerron, Monsieur.
Chester, Daniel.
Coryat, Tom.
Court, Auguste.
Cuillier, Pierre (see Perron).

D.

De Courcy.
De Facieu.
De La Roche.
De L'ust.
De Turk.
Dick, William.
Dotterweiss.
Dowson, Clement.
Dubuignon.

F.

Farris.
Fendrid.

F—*concluded.*

Ferrier.
Fitzroy, John.
Ford, Matthew W.
Foulkes, R.
Francis.
Fukinaul, T.

G.

Gardiner, Alexander.
Gervais.
Gillmore.
Gillot or Ghitt (see Quilette).
Gordon (see Carron).
Gould, John.
Guthrie.

H.

Harlan, Josiah.
Harvey, Doctor.
Heaney, Matthew or O'Brien.
Hearsey.
Hest.
Hicks, John or William.
Holmes, John.
Honigberger, Dr. Martin.
Hopkins.
Howell, John.
Hurbons.

J.

Jackson (see James).
James (see Jackson).
Jan Sahib.
Jones.

K.

Kanara.
Kerville (Cazroll).

L.

La Font (1).
La Font (2).
Lairdee.
Lane, Stephen.
Lawrence or Gomez, Allard.

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